



# People of the ice bridge: The future of the Pikialasorsuaq

Communities, Conservation & Livelihoods

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**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE  
PIKIALASORSUAQ COMMISSION**

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# THE PIKIALASORSUAQ

- The Pikialasorsuaq is an immensely significant area under increasing threat



Map of Pikialasorsuaq between Nunavut, Canada and Greenland

# CONTEXT: INTERNATIONAL

- Growing momentum in ocean protection by applying conservation measures to designated marine areas
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 11: >10% of marine and coastal areas to be conserved
- The Arctic Council's working group Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment has created toolboxes to help Arctic countries and regions develop Marine Protected Areas.
- Many organizations supporting and promoting marine protection of key areas in Circumpolar Arctic (WWF, IUCN)

# CONTEXT: CANADA

- Federal commitment to Aichi Target
- Mechanisms under different federal departments, e.g.:
  - Marine Protected Areas (DFO)
  - National Wildlife Areas (ECCC)
  - National Marine Conservation Area (Parks Canada)
- 2017 proposal by Mary Simon—create Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA)

Iglunaksuak Point/Kangeq. On the way from Siorapaluk to Qaanaaq.

# PIKIALASORSUAQ COMMISSION

- Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) initiated the Inuit-led Pikialasorsuaq Commission



Commissioners Kuupik Kleist,  
Okalik Egeesiak, Eva Aariak

# PIKIALASORSUAQ COMMISSION

- Commission was mandated to:
  - Conduct consultations in communities in Canada and Greenland closely connected to Pikialasorsuaq
  - Communicate how Inuit communities envision the future of this marine region



Commission arriving in Qaanaaq, Greenland

# PIKIALASORSUAQ COMMISSION

- Meetings in Canada: Ajuittuq (Grise Fiord), Qausuittuq (Resolute Bay), Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) & Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River)
- Meetings in Greenland: Siorapaluk, Qaanaaq, Savissivik, Kullorsuaq, Nuussuaq & Upernavik



Meeting in Savissivik, Greenland



Expert meeting in Savissivik, Greenland



Photo credit: Kuupik Kleist



Ham Ikkarrialuk Kadloo, Mittimatalik



Rhoda Koonoo, Ikpiarjuk

Photo credit: Vincent Desrosiers

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# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

- Interdependence and intimate relationship with the land & specifically with the polynya

*[Going out on the land] depends on the weather and the conditions of the ice. And, a lot of that will be dictated by the condition of the polynya.*

–Marty Kulluguktuq, Ajuittuq (Grise Fiord)

*Pikialasorsuaq as the provider has been known since time immemorial.*

–Mads Ole Kristiansen, Qaanaaq



# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- Impacts on travel across ice bridge



# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

## FOOD SECURITY

- Importance for food security and physical and mental well-being



# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

## DEVELOPMENT: SHIPPING, FISHERIES, TOURISM, MINING

- Understanding of economic benefits of exploration and mining, but also concern about environmental damage
- Concern around the greater number of ships and negative effects on wildlife
- Caution around increased tourism & awareness of potential benefits



Vessel Adolf Jensen, chartered for consultations, anchored in Kullorsuaq

# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

*The desire is not to prohibit tourists from coming, but rather to make sure they do not have a negative impact upon wildlife in the polynya.*

–Marty Kulluguktuq, Ajuittuq (Grise Fiord)



Clipper Adventurer tourist ship

# WHAT THE COMMISSION HEARD

## MILITARY ACTIVITIES

- History of military activities in area; potential contamination from rocket debris and unspent fuel requires attention



Thick-billed murre near Bylot Island, Nunavut

# RECOMMENDATION #1: INUIT-LED MANAGEMENT REGIME

Establishment of a management regime with an Inuit Management Authority (IMA):

- IMA membership from communities near Pikialasorsuaq
- Would oversee monitoring, research, & promote protection of living resources & related community wellbeing





# RECOMMENDATION #2: ESTABLISHMENT OF MANAGEMENT ZONE

Identification of a protected area:

- Comprised of the polynya plus a larger management zone
- Area to be identified in consultation with communities near Pikialasorsuaq



Photo credit: Byarne Lyberth

Qaernгааq Nielsen at meeting in Savissivik

# RECOMMENDATION #2: ESTABLISHMENT OF MANAGEMENT ZONE

## MECHANISMS

- International law instruments:
  - Current state rights under UN Convention on Law of the Sea
  - Adoption of Particularly Sensitive Sea Area designation (International Maritime Organization)
- Bilateral agreements (e.g. Joint Development Agreement) and regional initiatives
- Domestic legal instruments
- Indigenous Protected Areas

# RECOMMENDATION #3: ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE TRAVEL ZONE

- Establishment of a free travel zone for Inuit across Pikialasorsuaq region



# UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Supports the Commission's recommendations
- Canada & Denmark are signatories and have responsibilities to uphold these rights

*Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen distinctive spiritual relationship with traditionally owned and used lands, waters, coastal seas & to uphold responsibilities to future generations in this regard*

Photo credit: Bjarne Lyberth

# MOVING FORWARD

- Initiating the development of an agreement between Canada and Greenland through appropriate local and regional bodies and organizations
- Formalizing an IMA and its terms of reference
- Creating a management plan including an Inuit-led monitoring program



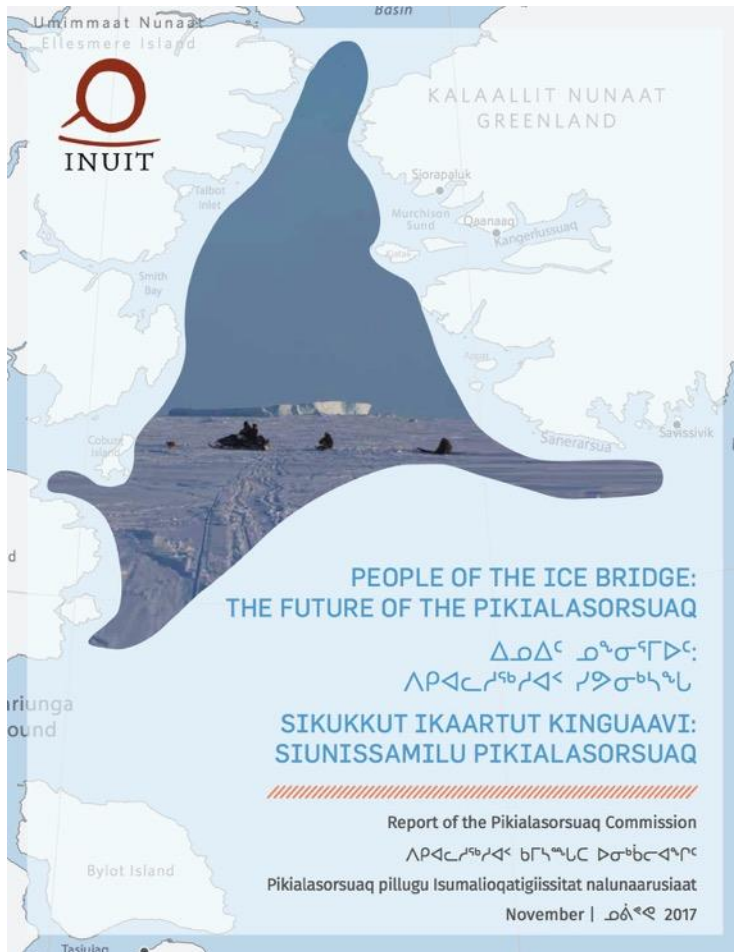
# QUJANNAMIK, QUJANAQ, AINGAI

Community members in Ajuittuq (Grise Fiord), Qausuittuq (Resolute Bay), Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) & Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River), Siorapaluk, Qaanaaq, Savissivik, Kullorsuaq, Nuussuaq & Upernavik



# MORE INFORMATION

Trilingual report



Website

[www.pikialasorsuaq.org](http://www.pikialasorsuaq.org)

