

Ontario to review lack of First Nations jurors **Judge to investigate underrepresentation, particularly of members from reserves**

POSTMEDIA NEWS

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Former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci will head a review into why First Nations members - especially those living on reserves - are underrepresented on Ontario's jury rolls.

The announcement was made Thursday evening by Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General.

Iacobucci will review the existing processes and produce a report within a year.

"First Nations alienation from the justice system is our reality," Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose said in a separate statement on Thursday evening.

"First Nations overrepresentation among those who are charged and jailed is only made worse by the fact that First Nations have been systematically denied their right to serve on juries," Waboose said.

In a statement on the ministry website, Attorney General Chris Bentley said Iacobucci's particular expertise in the area of aboriginal law will be a "tremendous asset" to the review.

A lawyer for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation called the independent inquiry "a first in Canada."

"Justice Iacobucci's credibility as an independent reviewer is a reason to be optimistic about the outcome of this historic exercise," Julian Falconer said in a press release.

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