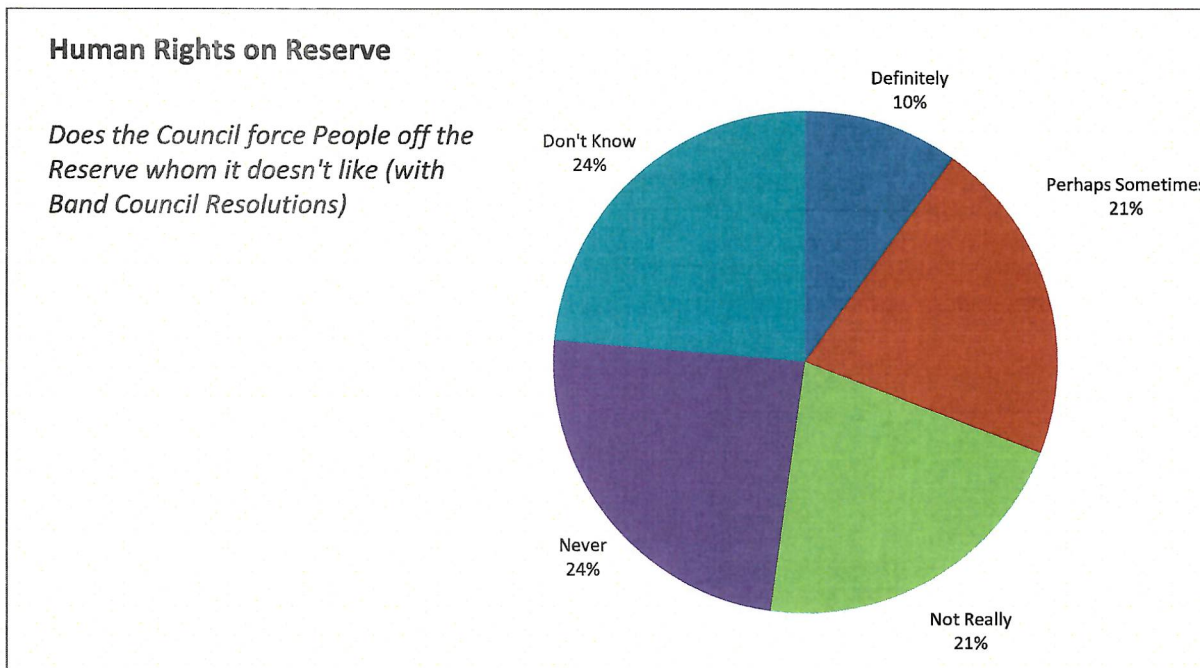


Human Rights on Reserve

A prerequisite for a successful community is that individuals feel physically safe and secure in the possession of their property. Our survey suggests that in some reserves, this condition is not met. Unbeknownst to many non-aboriginal Canadians, band governments possess the ability to revoke an individual's membership in the band through "Band Council Resolutions" (BCRs). These resolutions can be used to remove individuals and families from communities by annulling their membership in the band.

In order to evaluate whether or not band governments are exercising this power for arbitrary or personal reasons, we asked our respondents whether their band council uses BCRs to force people "whom it doesn't like" off of the reserve.



- A clear majority of our respondents gave responses that suggest that the use of BCRs for personal reasons is not a common occurrence in their community.
- 24 per cent of those surveyed said that their council "never" engages in this sort of behaviour. An additional 21 per cent said that the council "does not really" behave this way.
- However, a sizeable minority of respondents suggested that people who the council "does not like" are being removed from the community. Ten per cent said that their council "definitely" removes such individuals with BCRs, and an additional 21 per cent said that the council "perhaps sometimes" does so.

It is a source of concern that a sizeable minority suggests that band councils would remove individuals on this basis. Nobody should be forcibly removed from their community because the council "does not like them." In order to enjoy sustained growth and to begin to address important social and economic challenges, band councils that engage in this sort of behaviour should immediately put a stop to the practice, in order to ensure that the basic human rights of all residents are protected.

Source: The Third Annual Aboriginal governance Index. Available at www.fcpp.org