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Nunavut premier expects support from caucus to remove minister from cabinet



The Canadian Press
Emma Tranter

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IQALUIT, Nunavut — Nunavut’s premier says he believes his motion to remove a member of his cabinet over a social media post will pass when it is voted on later this week.

Premier Joe Savikataaq stripped Patterk Netser of his housing and Nunavut Arctic College portfolios Oct. 8, after Netser made a Facebook post that said “All lives matter” and questioned why Black women have abortions.



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Nunavut's members of the legislature are to debate then vote on the motion to remove Netser on Friday.

"I expect it to pass," Savikataaq said told reporters Wednesday.

Netser, who is still a member of cabinet despite not having any portfolios, rose during the assembly's statements period to "present the facts to this house and address concerns and hopefully answer questions my colleagues may have."

He told the assembly it is "no secret" that he is of Christian faith and is against abortions.

"Based on my Christian beliefs and convictions, I simply asked a question to the public. I was not raising this question against any government, policy or legislation," Netser said.

"I have been stripped of my portfolios as minister in this government because of my Christian principles and values."

Savikataaq took issue with Netser's statement.

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“I did not strip minister Netser _____ an) beliefs,” he said.

“His comments were based in racism and gender violence and that’s not reflective of the (government of Nunavut’s) values and principles.”

Netser apologized again to the Black community for his comments.

“I sincerely apologize and please know it was never my intention to offend anyone,” he said.

Netser, who represents Coral Harbour and Naujaat, was first elected to the territory’s legislative assembly in 2004 and has held several cabinet portfolios in Nunavut’s consensus-style government, which has no political parties. Cabinet ministers are chosen by all elected members and their portfolios are assigned by the premier.

In a consensus government, only caucus, not the premier, has the power to remove a minister from cabinet.

Motions need unanimous consent to pass without debate. When Savikataaq asked for unanimous consent for the motion to remove Netser, only one member, Netser, said “nay.”

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