

# CONFEDERACY OF TREATY SIX FIRST NATIONS



HEAD OFFICE: ENOCH CREE NATION NO. 135 P.O. BOX 270, ENOCH AB T7X 3Y3

October 21, 2020

Dear Canada,

When will Canada truly recognize and respect the first peoples of this land and our ways of living? When will Canada understand that, we, the Indigenous Peoples are not to be regulated, controlled, or conquered? When will our people have to stop defending who we are to our neighbors?

The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Chiefs are sickened to see our relatives endure terroristic attacks on their own Traditional Territory, with little to no protection from the Canadian government. Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island are disturbed and outraged at the lack of care, compassion, and support that this Canadian Government has offered to the Mi'kmaq people in the face of racism. It is shameful how this government, our Treaty partners, have allowed this type of behavior to carry on for as long as it has. Even after a direct plea to uphold the order of the law from Chief Sack, Prime Minister Trudeau, has managed to avoid that responsibility.

Other words of resolve offered by the Prime Minister include such statements as him stressing the importance to uphold the rights that have long been recognized for indigenous fisherman and their right to fish. In 21 years, since the Marshall decision, those rights have been affirmed and have since granted licenses to indigenous communities. Clearly those words are meant for the average Canadian who finds political jargon soothing, because as we know the Indigenous Peoples of this land are born with that right to live of the land, it is who we are.

Our way of life is gifted to our peoples, by the Creator and has been entrusted to us to protect and care for the land. This right is not granted by any one person, ministry, or policy that graciously issues "licenses" so that we may continue being the people we were born to be. I believe Indigenous People across the land will agree that the message needs to be clear, when it comes to living off the land: Indigenous people are not seeking permission to practice our treaty rights, nor do we seek additional licenses to validate or allow us to continue being who we are. We are asking you to help your fellow Canadians, your visitors to our land, to recognize that this land was entrusted to our people and we will carry out that right by living off of it in a way that cannot be written. Without our ways and without our land, our people will perish, time and history has validated this fact.

Indigenous tribes here on Turtle Island understand what it means to live off the land, it is not a moderate livelihood and it is not necessary for your government to define that for the Mi'kmaq. It is who they are, it is how they survive, it is the ways of their ancestors. This way of life does not require regulations to satisfy you, the visitors of this land and your governments.

The land we stand on is rich and will provide the human race with plenty, if we respect what is offered. This land was loaned to you with the understanding that your people would respectfully occupy an existence to nurture your families for years to come. As visitors to this land, it is unacceptable that your people continuously disrespect the land and our people. This land is not for you to abuse, nor is it your place to violate, terrorize, and interrupt the way of life for the first peoples of this land.

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Your government has fought tirelessly to redefine our people and our ways of life, for no reason other than to bring comfort and ease to your own political agendas. History has proven your government has failed our people in every way, yet, this government still wants to impose policy and regulations on our existence to benefit and accommodate those who steal endlessly from our Mother Earth. Let us be clear that your need to regulate hunting and fishing rights have no value in our ways, it is simply the need to regulate greed. Commercial fishery is your lifestyle, not ours. Your people lack the understanding of moderate living, yet you feel qualified to impose upon the Mi'kmaq people your rule of moderate living.

It is a disgrace that during a time of healing and Canada's reconciliation that our people are still fighting to prove our ways of life is of great importance to us. In a time where Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island are reclaiming our ways due to the attempted slaughters of our culture, we cannot continue to stall our ways of life to tend to the lack of education in your guests on this land. The numbered Treaties of Canada were negotiated for a reason- to share the land, something our people have done beyond what is deserved. Nonetheless, we will continue to find ways to encourage a nation-to-nation relationship because that is a mechanism, we do see value in when it comes to honoring and upholding the sacred Treaties.

The Chiefs of The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, send our full support to Chief Sack and the Mi'kmaq people during this time of injustice. We celebrate our brothers and sisters for upholding their Treaty Rights and we encourage them to continue doing so. We admire the patience that the Mi'kmaq people have displayed at a time when it is not earned. The Confederacy of Treaty Six Chiefs, openly support our relations during this time of need, together we stand with you. (not sure if I will use at the beginning or the end)

In closing, we share this message with our fellow warriors: "The people of Treaty No. 6 will continue to pray for each of you, be assured that when the time comes and we are needed at your side, we will be there. Our people will ride the waters to your home fires and stand together with your people, peacefully, under the watch of our creator"

Sincerely,

The Chiefs of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations

CC:

The Honourable Bill Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P., Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., Q.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P., Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P., Minister of Indigenous Services

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard