



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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*As per the MCK
Communications Protocol,
all media requests must be
arranged through the Public
Relations / Communications
Unit*

MCK does not condone conduct of Nitsénhaienhs

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 28, Kenténha/October 2020) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community of its disappointment in regards to the conduct of two Nitsénhaienhs who violated Directive 36.3 *Private Gatherings Not Permitted* issued by the Kahnawà:ke COVID-19 Task Force (Task Force) on October 7th, 2020.

On Sunday, October 25th, Nitsénhaienhs Harry Rice and Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer chose to attend an outdoor private gathering at a residence. After a report was made to the Kahnawake Mohawk Peacekeepers, the private gathering was intervened and Rice was one of those in attendance who was later issued a fine for violating a Task Force Directive. Sky-Deer and Rice were not at the gathering at the same time.

Although disappointed with the actions of the Nitsénhaienhs, the MCK acknowledges that both are taking the necessary steps to ensure they are held accountable for their actions. Both have issued public apologies and Mr Rice will pay the fine associated with violating Directives. Additionally, in order to maintain the integrity of the Task Force, Ratsénhaienhs Rice has stepped down as an MCK political representative on the Task Force and the Community Protection portfolio, effective immediately.

The Council of Chiefs do not condone these actions. We, as leaders must set the example for others in the community. All sectors of the community, especially leadership, should know and follow the directives put in place by the Task Force. We need to keep our community, and especially, our most vulnerable, safe during the pandemic.

An announcement on the newly appointed MCK political representative on the Task Force is forthcoming.

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Statement from Ratsénhaienhs Harry Rice

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 28, Kenténha/October 2020) The following is a statement issued to the community by Ratsénhaienhs Harry Rice.

Greetings Kahnawa'kehró:non,

I would like to address the Community regarding the Kahnawake Mohawk Peacekeepers recently fining Community members for an outdoor gathering at a private home. I was one of those fined and would like to express my sincerest apologies to the Community, my family, friends, the Task Force and the Council Table. As a member of the Kahnawà:ke Covid-19 Task Force and an elected Ratsénhaienhs, I am owning my actions and in order to maintain the integrity of the Task Force, I have stepped down from the Task Force and the Community Protection portfolio, effective immediately.

Niawenhkó:wa,

Chief Harry Angus Skahionhati Rice

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Statement from Ietsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 28, Kenténha/October 2020) The following is a statement issued to the community by Ietsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer.

Kwe Kahnawa'kehró:non,

On Sunday, October 25, 2020, I attended an outdoor gathering intended to be a drop in birthday party for a long time friend. I kept my distance, wore a facial covering and I had left the gathering before the Peacekeepers directed individuals to disperse. I also did not enter their home at any point and honestly did not believe I was doing anything wrong nor putting the community in danger with my presence.

However, as a leader and representative of the MCK, I should know clear and well what the directives are from the Task Force. Which at this point is "no public gatherings inside or outside". I must say that I do not think I am above anyone in the community and I must take responsibility and accountability for my actions.

I have to truly express regret and apologize to the community for my decision to attend. I know everyone in Kahnawà:ke is feeling the stress and anxiety of being under strict directives and orders while during this Pandemic by not being able to see friends and family. The Task Force has been diligent in putting in place measures to be respected by all, for the safety and protection of the community. I am no different and should have used better judgement even if social distancing, masking and hand sanitizing was exercised. The sheer optics of my presence is that I am not subject to the same standards as others and that is unacceptable.

For this, I apologize to the People of Kahnawà:ke, the Kahnawà:ke Task Force and to the Mohawk Council of Chiefs for my ill advised decision. There's no excuse on my part for my conduct and decision making. I try to do my best in leading by example and I take my role on Council very seriously. However, I am human and there will be instances when I make mistakes. I hope you will not allow this incident to lose confidence in me or my ability to do the job. It only holds me to the fire of the expectations and higher standards that we must be held to if we are elected representatives of this community.

Niawenhkó:wa for your understanding.

*Sincerely,
Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer*

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