



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

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Enhsakotò:kénhte Nitiotié:ren Tsi Ietsenhaiéntákhwa

Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

Mohawk Women Chiefs from three communities to visit Chief Spence; MCK to deliver Open Letter to Prime Minister; update on Idle No More rally on Friday

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 18, Tsothóhrha/December 2012) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community that Chief & Council will deliver an open letter (see attached) to Prime Minister Stephen Harper demanding that, 1) he meet with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence and, 2) address the issue of an unprecedented series of laws that are oppressive and insulting to First Nations.

“This government is the most disrespectful towards Native people that I've ever seen,” said Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle, Jr. “It feels like any positive movement we've seen in the past hundred years is being systematically destroyed in a manner that is shocking to even the most jaded among us.”

Additionally, **Kahnawà:ke Chiefs** Rhonda Kirby, Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, Christine Zachary-Deom and Gina Deer will be joined by **Kanesatake Chiefs** Sonya Gagnier, Shannon Nicholas, Sheila Bonspiel and **Akwesasne Chiefs** Karen Loran, Louise Thompson and April Adams-Phillips to meet with Chief Spence tomorrow (Wednesday) to offer the support of our communities during this second week of her hunger strike.

Finally, the MCK announced that Chiefs Delisle, Lloyd Phillips and Clinton Phillips will participate in Friday's Idle No More day of solidarity in Ottawa. A bus has been secured at no charge for community members who wish to attend; the exact time of departure will be announced before the event. Because school is still in session, only one bus is available and seats are limited.

For those who cannot travel to Ottawa, Idle No More events are being organized in Cabot Square in Montreal at 12 noon on Friday and at the Kanesatake Pines at 10am on Saturday.

The MCK will do its best to ensure it provides the community with the most current information possible.

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Please contact:
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STRENGTH

PEACE

UNITY

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HAND DELIVERED

19, Tsothóhrha/December 2012

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Please consider this letter a formal expression of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke's overwhelming support for Chief Theresa Spence during her hunger strike, coupled with our grave concerns regarding Canada's oppressive legislative approach with respect to First Nations.

The Kanien:keha'ka community of Kahnawà:ke has had a lengthy and eventful relationship with the Crown that has spanned across many generations. The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke regards Kanien:keha'ka laws, teachings and worldview with the upmost esteem, and applies these to guide the governance of our community, including consideration of the Two Row Wampum and subsequent agreements between our Peoples and the Crown. These are the cornerstone in setting equal relations between Canada and the Kanien'kehá:ka. The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is firm in its commitments to not only honor these agreements, but to also hold Canada to its obligations.

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke has grown increasingly concerned with the paternalistic legislative approach that Canada has taken regarding First Nations affairs, which is in conflict with not only our inherent right to self-determination, but is also a violation of the agreements between our People and the Crown. The recent passage of the Omnibus Budget Bill C-45 is an offensive action on Canada's part that is causing an obvious and serious deterioration in First Nations/Canada relations. The unwillingness to take corrective measures and continue to consider further legislation impacting First Nations only promotes further dissent. At this time, we feel obliged to caution Canada that continuance of this type of unilateral and paternalistic approach will only result in further deterioration and dissent amongst First Nations Peoples.

The recent Idle No More movement is an unprecedented civic response to the systemic approach of Canada to legislate First Nations affairs. We have watched this movement grow across the country and are moved by the level of engagement of individual First Nations people across Turtle Island. We have also watched the beginnings of this movement at a grassroots level within our own community; the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke has an obligation to honor the rights of our individual members to have their voices heard as part of this movement.

Chief Spence is undertaking one of the most selfless *and uncompromising* acts in recent history in an attempt to bring Canada to the table to honor its duties and obligations. It is deplorable that a leader must resort to such drastic measures to raise attention to the conditions that the First Peoples of Canada currently face.

We are adamant in our insistence that Canada acts in a manner that upholds the 'Honor of the Crown' and deal with us as equal partners as was committed to by our forefathers in our original relationship agreements. As a first gesture of this, we demand that Canada agree to Chief Spence's requests to meet with you, and the Governor General, immediately. We also demand that Canada immediately cease its unilateral legislative approach and meet with First nations early in the New Year in a First Nations/Crown forum. This forum is imperative in ensuring all required First Nations and the Crown are represented to mend relations and collectively set an approach for moving forward. Anything less in meeting these demands is unacceptable.

In Peace and Friendship,

**ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
MOHAWK COUNCIL OF KAHNAWÀ:KE**



Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle Jr

Md/JD/12192012/S.Harper

CC: The Right Honourable David Johnston Governor General of Canada
Chief and Council
File