

5 Kenténha/October 2020

Grand Chief Constant Awashish
& Council of Atikamekw Nation
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The Echaquan Family, Grand Chief & Council, Atikamekw Community & Nation,

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to offer its sincerest condolences on the passing of Joyce Echaquan.

The circumstances of her passing have sent shockwaves across the country. It is inconceivable that a situation such as this could happen in 2020, but her recording of the sad events that preceded her death has caused shock and outrage. Despite this, we must first remember that Joyce Echaquan was much loved by her family, including her seven children. We must remember that there is now a huge void in their lives and in the lives of those in her small community. On behalf of all of the people of Kahnawà:ke, we are taking the time to acknowledge the fact that she was first and foremost a beautiful human being and a proud member of the Atikamekw Nation. It will now be up to her family, friends and community to carry on her duties. We wish them the strength to carry on during this very difficult time. We stand by Joyce's family and her community during this period of mourning.

We are hopeful that the unfortunate circumstances of her final hours can serve as inspiration for change. For far too long Indigenous people have been victims of racism. While this in itself is deplorable, it is even more alarming that, in this instance, some of the very people who are responsible to care for the sick were guilty of such hateful actions. Systemic racism is a long-standing problem that continues to be dismissed or ignored by many who are in a position to take action to address this horrible reality. This must change.

As Joyce enters the Spirit World, we should reflect on the positive aspects of her life. It is very clear that her passing has had a significant impact on Indigenous people far beyond the community. May her family find comfort in the sympathy from people across Turtle Island, and the many friends of Indigenous people who have been just as horrified by the events of the past few days. Perhaps her actions will help ensure that those who follow may never have to experience the racism that she faced with such bravery and resolve.

May she rest in peace.

In Peace and Friendship,

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