



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

tkwəłniwt (Westbank), Syilx Okanagan Territory: The Chiefs of the Syilx Okanagan Nation have watched with distress as Mi'kmaq fishers, including members of the Sipekne'katik First Nation, have been subjected to violence, intimidation, terror and racism as they seek to exercise their inherent, human and constitutionally protected rights, including treaty rights.

Canadians pride themselves on living in a Nation that is supposedly founded on the rule of law. For over twenty years, since the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R v Marshall*, it has been settled law in Canada that the Mi'kmaq have a constitutionally protected treaty right to fish for a Moderate Livelihood. Despite this, those who readily point to the rule of law as justification for forcibly removing and imprisoning Indigenous land and water defenders for protecting their territories, remain deafeningly silent in the face of the abhorrent violence currently taking place in Mi'kma'ki. It is apparent that Canada's laws do not serve to equally protect all of those who live within its imposed borders. We can not and will not stay silent in the face of this terror.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, DFO Minister Bernadette Jordan and the RCMP's inaction in Mi'kma'ki has not gone unnoticed. Throughout Canada's history we have seen that when Indigenous people organize and stand for our rights we are quickly confronted by the military or militarized RCMP officers tasked with protecting the interests of those who seek to exploit us and our territories. In the past few days video has emerged from Mi'kma'ki showing Mi'kmaq (including Chiefs and elders), being assaulted, Mi'kmaq property being destroyed and mobs intimidating Mi'kmaq fishers for doing that which they have an inherent and constitutionally protected right to do. Where is the military and RCMP response now? Where is Canada's urgency and alarm?

"This racist double standard must be called out and it must cease. We call on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, DFO Minister Bernadette Jordan and the RCMP to take immediate and decisive action to ensure that no more violence occurs and that the Mi'kmaq may exercise their inherent and constitutionally protected rights without concern for their own safety, or the safety of their property," stated Chief Executive Council Tribal Chair, Chief Clarence Louie.

The Syilx Okanagan Nation will be organizing actions in solidarity with the Mi'kmaq for as long as our solidarity is needed. We will not sit in silence as the inherent, human and constitutionally protected rights of our First Nations relatives on the east coast are violated with impunity.

For more information please contact:

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