

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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News Release

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UBCIC Statement on Lobster Fishery and RCMP Inaction to Protect the Mi'kmaq from Violence

((X^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – October 22, 2020) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is enraged about the blatant illegality of the RCMP indifference to violence against the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia. The failure to act to keep the peace and secure the rights and safety of the Mi'kmaq people is a clear dereliction of duty.

The callous aggression toward the Mi'kmaq who are operating a lobster fishery, and the complete inaction of the RCMP, is indicative of a breakdown in the Rule of Law. The RCMP must act to enforce the Criminal Code and to provide protection for those from the Sipekne'katik First Nation, and all Mi'kmaq communities, exercising their Treaty Rights in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq are endeavoring to earn a "moderate livelihood" as guaranteed to them according to Section 35 of the Constitution of Canada and affirmed through the Supreme Court of Canada *Marshall* decision. They are doing this during a global pandemic when providing for their families is necessary. Their inherent and constitutionally protected rights, existent for more than 200 years, must be properly recognized and implemented. The RCMP have a duty to protect the lives and property of the Mi'kmaq, and to defend their rights, which are enshrined in law.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of UBCIC stated "The Mi'kmaq have Treaty rights that have been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada to a livelihood in their fishery. They are acting within the law and deserve protection and respect. The fact that the RCMP stand by while their lobster pound burns, and assaults occur, is absolutely shocking and disturbing, and is an example of the systemic racism that plagues this country and the so-called justice system."

Chief Don Tom, Vice-President of the UBCIC continued, "UBCIC has raised concern in the past with the RCMP Complaints Process regarding the overzealous manner in which RCMP police Indigenous rights and land protectors. Complaints filed were dismissed yet the issues are never

resolved properly. The Prime Minister of Canada must address the obvious double standard and racism that is a blight on police services.”

“In BC, we have seen the land protectors policed in an aggressive manner. This includes unwarranted searches, seizures and harassment. The RCMP is not policing fairly and is not acknowledging the error in its failure to take action so far. We call on Commissioner Brenda Lucki to resign and for Canada to appoint a replacement who will immediately work to investigate the obvious racism that is part of the RCMP at every level,” stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of UBCIC. “Canada has committed to introduce legislation to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by the end of this year, yet stands to face another #shutdownCanada if it continues to blatantly disregard the rights of Indigenous peoples.”

The UBCIC stands in solidarity with the Mi'kmaq peoples and the Sipekne'katik First Nation, and all Treaty rights holders in the Mi'kmaq Nation.

The Commissioner of the RCMP does not grasp the magnitude of the problems with the enforcement of law and protection of the Mi'kmaq. The Commissioner has denied the existence of racism and discrimination in the past. It is past due for a new Commissioner and a meaningful process for implementing the Mi'kmaq Treaty rights.

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca