



Whapmagoostui
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Chisasibi
ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Wemindji
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Eastmain
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Waskaganish
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Nemaska
ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Waswanipi
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Ouje-Bougoumou
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Mistissini
ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Washaw Sibi
ᐱᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

McCrebec
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CREE NATION STATEMENT

CANADA MUST ACT TO STOP THE VIOLENCE AGAINST MI'KMAQ FISHERS

Nemaska, Eeyou Istchee (October 23, 2020) – The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee has observed with growing alarm and anger the escalating violence directed at Mi'kmaq lobster fishers in Nova Scotia. The violence has been at the hands of non-Indigenous commercial fishers who take issue with the Mi'kmaq exercising their treaty right to fish for a moderate livelihood. The Supreme Court of Canada expressly recognized this treaty right as protected by the *Constitution of Canada* in the two landmark *Marshall* judgments of 1999.

Despite these judgements, tensions have persisted between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lobster fishers. These tensions have been due in large part to the failure of the Government of Canada to assume its responsibility to implement the *Marshall* decisions by negotiating a long-term plan to meet the legitimate needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers and of conservation.

These tensions, left simmering for the past 20 years, have boiled over into violence in recent weeks. Mi'kmaq fishers, including Sipekne'katik First Nation Chief Mike Sack, have been assaulted and intimidated, their lobster catch and gear destroyed, a lobster pound burned to the ground, a Mi'kmaw fishing boat destroyed by fire and a van torched.

The Cree Nation agrees with Senator Murray Sinclair when he calls this violence “acts of terror”. We agree with Minister Marc Miller of Indigenous Services when he says that the RCMP has “let down” the Mi'kmaq. We find it hard to agree with Prime Minister Trudeau when he says that the Government of Canada has been extremely active in trying to resolve the situation. And we find it very hard to agree with RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki when she states that the RCMP is “managing this issue”. We see little evidence of that.

Chief Mike Sack said it best last week:

“Somebody could have died last night... Systemic racism at its finest. We all believe and know that if the shoe was on the other foot, there'd be a ton of cops here, the army would be here, National Guard, everyone – I'm not sure why our lives are less valuable than anyone else.”

