



Nisga'a Lisims Government

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Nisga'a Government Calls on Prime Minister to Protect Mi'kmaw Fishers

October 22, 2020—New Aiyansh, B.C.: In light of the vandalism, intimidation, and violence directed at Indigenous people in Nova Scotia, the Nisga'a Nation calls on the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia, and the RCMP, to act decisively in protecting Mi'kmaw fishers and in upholding their constitutionally recognized right to fish. Nisga'a Lisims Government considers the recent attacks on Mi'kmaw fishers an assault on all Indigenous people and the rule of law.

"We are shocked by what's happening in Nova Scotia," says Eva Clayton, president of Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG). "The physical violence is a clear example of systemic racism. The Mi'kmaw fishers have the right to fish for their livelihood. It is unacceptable for Canada, Nova Scotia, and the RCMP to stand idly by while Indigenous people are targeted. The Mi'kmaw have the right to set their lobster traps to feed their families in the midst of the pandemic. NLG Executive (comprised of four National Officers, four Chief Councillors, and three Nisga'a Urban Locals) stands in solidarity with the Sipekne'katik First Nation and Mi'kmaw fishers. Canada, Nova Scotia, and the RCMP must protect Indigenous people from violence and intimidation, support their right to fish, and honour their agreements with First Nations," Clayton says.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement is British Columbia's first modern treaty. It required 113 years of petition and negotiation by generations of Nisga'a and is implemented by three treaty partners—the Nisga'a Nation, Canada, and British Columbia. Like the landmark 1999 *Marshall* Decision affirming Mi'kmaw fishing rights, the Nisga'a Treaty relies on the rule of law and the honouring of commitments.

The Nisga'a Nation has managed its own fishery since 1992 and has been recognized both nationally and internationally for its commitment to conservation. For Indigenous people, the importance of access to fish stocks—for both cultural and economic wellbeing—cannot be overstated.

“The Prime Minister speaks frequently of reconciliation,” Clayton says. “Now is the time to act. We call on him to respond to the situation in Nova Scotia with action, not words. Over the following days and weeks, the world will be watching to see how Canada lives up to its commitments.”

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