

Ardoch Algonquin First Nation
Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation

Statement Delivered at Queens Park

September 21, 2007

We see the ongoing colonization of our people and the rape of our lands as being directly connected to Canada's refusal to sign onto or ratify the Declaration of Indigenous Rights. Harper was not willing to commit Canada to a path of reconciliation and renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples because he knew that Canada's economy is based on resource extractions. Since the majority of those resources come from the lands of Indigenous peoples, Harper figured that Canada would not be able to wholeheartedly steal our lands and resources as has been happening literally since Confederation.

As the Province responsible for natural resources under Confederation, Ontario has maintained a regime of control over the majority of our lands and waterscapes in the valley of the Kiji Sibì (Ottawa Valley). Over the past 140 years this has led to conflicts, charges being laid, court proceedings, and various direct actions throughout Algonquin territory to protect the land and maintain our responsibilities. This is what we are doing presently at the Robertsville mine site, maintaining our responsibilities to the land and the water as we are required to do under Algonquin law.

Canada has failed in its fiduciary responsibility to protect our lands and resources as is required under the guidelines of the Proclamation of 1763 which were embedded in Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. Ontario has failed its fiduciary responsibilities to us as Aboriginal peoples by allowing our lands to be staked and cleared for uranium exploration under the Mining Act which has no legal force on our lands as Algonquin people. Our lands were never sold nor surrendered to the Crown. Our title and jurisdiction remain intact on these lands and we challenge the constitutionality of the Mining Act with respect to our territory as well as that of our non-Algonquin neighbours. While we recognize their rights to enjoy their property, the minerals underneath those properties remain under the title and jurisdiction of Algonquin Law.

Ontario did not consult us at all before allowing Frontenac Ventures to stake our lands and that of our neighbours. They did not consult us prior to issuing or registering mining claims in the name of Frontenac Ventures. Therefore Ontario is liable for the actions they took to offer over our lands to Frontenac Ventures for uranium exploration. Ontario did not question the constitutionality of the Mining Act with respect to the lands in question which also makes Ontario liable and guilty of failing in its

responsibilities to protect our lands as is in keeping with the honour of the Crown. Ontario has also failed by filing findings asking the court to limit consultation with us to where Frontenac can drill. Consultation must start with the constitutionality of the mining act and the legitimacy of the staking itself on those particular lands, not where a mining company can drill after they have already damaged watersheds with the constructions of roads into sacred lands.

Ontario has also failed with respect to implementing the recommendations suggested in the Ipperwash Inquiry final report. Justice Lynden stated that these sorts of situations should be allowed to work themselves out through political solutions to prevent further conflict and escalation of these sorts of situations. Ontario has failed in its responsibility by enabling the issuing of warrants for our arrest for contempt because we refuse to leave our lands so that Frontenac can come in and destroy our homeland. This was done in spite of the fact that the OPP have taken steps not to escalate the situation and maintain the safety of all involved. They have chosen to assist in finding a resolution through mediation and negotiation. Even after the injunction came down they maintained this position. While the OPP seem to have learned from the Ipperwash tragedy, apparently Ontario and Canada have not. Frontenac Ventures was able to circumvent the recommendations of that inquiry by filing private information's in court against Algonquin leaders and successfully subpoenaing OPP officers to testify about whom they saw at the site. This action not only resulted in contempt charges and warrants for the arrest of Algonquin leaders as well as one settler and a member of the Christian Peacekeepers, it also resulted in placing in jeopardy the ART/MELT programs established by the OPP (as a result of Ipperwash) to rebuild relationships with Aboriginal peoples.

As Algonquin people who have to remain on those lands under Algonquin law, we call on the governments of Canada and Ontario to respect our title and jurisdiction which requires us to maintain our responsibilities to protect those lands and waterscapes. We call on the other countries who signed the declaration of Indigenous Rights to speak out against this continual rape of our lands and colonization of our people. We need these lands to sustain us as people culturally, spiritually, and also for sustenance. These lands are sacred to us and must be protected for the future use of our people and our neighbours who have chosen to live within the guidelines of Algonquin law.

In spite of the fact that we may lose our leadership through arrest and possible incarceration, we will not leave the site until the demands set forth in our letter to the Premier is honoured by the province. A moratorium on uranium mining and also no further uses of our lands by the natural resources regime of Ontario without consultation and our consent.