



COMMUNITY NEWS

MFN Stands in Solidarity with Unist'ot'en Camp

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By Denise Payette, Communications Coordinator
Mississauga First Nation

Mississauga First Nation (MFN) members held a peaceful demonstration in solidarity with the Unist'ot'en Camp. The group, made up of about 50-60 people, occupied the Village Road and Highway 17 intersection (in front of Willie's Gas Bar), between 11am to 1pm. The demonstration was in response to a national call out from the hereditary leaders of Wet'suwet'en Nation. The decision to support Unist'ot'en Camp was a unanimous one, completely supported by Chief and Council, and the demonstration, *Stand with Unist'ot'en*, was organized by MFN members Peyton Pitawanakwat, Kyle (Kowgli) Chiblow and Tracy Fraser. It also had support from the Ontario Provincial Police, who ensured the safety of all who attended. The sole purpose of the demonstration was to show support as well as to share information to others.



Photograph of the participants by Cliff Niganobe – January 16, 2019

The solidarity call out was made from the Unist'ot'en Camp, which is located on sovereign Unist'ot'en traditional territory, by the Morice River Bridge, 1200 km from Vancouver, BC. The Unist'ot'en Clan is one of five clans that make up the Wet'suwet'en Nation. The camp has been established and opposing the development of pipelines on their territory since April 2009, and also contains a healing lodge on site. The recent news about the camp came after Coastal GasLink applied for, and was issued a temporary injunction from the BC Supreme Court in December, which prohibits anyone from blocking the bridge and

for the dismantlement within 72 hours. Since the Unist'ot'en Camp refused to allow access, the heavily armed RCMP were mobilized to enforce the injunction, which resulted in heavy force and a standoff.

"Mississauga First Nation stands in support of Unist'ot'en Camp and Wet'suwet'en in an attempt to defend their traditional territories from development, which they do not support. As Indigenous people, Mississauga understands this struggle, we encourage all Canadians to support us in standing with Wet'suwet'en for justice."

- Statement made by Chief Reg Niganobe

The key message that was shared during the demonstration, was the importance of answering and supporting other communities. Kyle Chiblow affirmed that, "Answering to solidarity calls shows unity amongst all Indigenous peoples, not only on Turtle Island, but across the world. The louder we amplify the voice of our traditional peoples, traditional knowledge keepers, and hereditary chiefs, the more we can preserve our way of life." Peyton Pitawanakwat, who is the Environmental Technician for MFN, also states that, "Indigenous communities are always facing lack of consultation when it comes to these multi-million dollar projects in our traditional territories, [and] as Anishinaabe people, we believe in our responsibility to protect Mother Earth, that is why we oppose these projects."

The use of social media, specifically the Stand with Unist'ot'en Facebook event page, had also played a large role in gathering supporters and sharing information. "We were able to reach people from outside of our community and have them attend today... [and] provide all the contact information for people to voice their opinions to our national leadership," Peyton. For more information on the Unist'ot'en Camp and to make a donation, you can visit their website <https://unist'ot'en.camp>. ●