



TŜILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

Tsilhqot'in Nation responds to increased level of violence

Williams Lake, BC (April 27, 2016): The Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG) leadership, comprised of six Tsilhqot'in Chiefs, is deeply troubled by the level of violent activity occurring in Williams Lake and surrounding communities. Over the past few years a number of Tsilhqot'in members and members of other First Nations have lost their lives through the increased violence in the region.

It is very clear that there are not enough resources devoted to First Nation communities to handle this escalating situation – from prevention to operating emergency response teams. The TNG urges the government to work directly with the First Nation communities to devise a strategy to combat these situations.

The TNG leadership encourage youth and other individuals to make positive choices in their lives. The escalation of dangerous activities will only lead to more heartbreak within all of our communities.

Quotes:

Chief Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman of the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Chief of Tl'etinqox:

“We all hold a role in working to reduce violence in the region and pull ourselves out of this state of emergency. For those youth that are involved directly in these activities – there is a better life out there, there is a better future for you and your family.”

“As leaders, it's our responsibility to make sure that every youth growing up knows that there is a bright future available to them. A majority of the prolific offenders have been in and out of the Ministry of Children and Families custody and are not having their basic needs met. Only we, as Tsilhqot'in, can develop solutions to these generational issues that our people face. It's up to the Province to stand by their word and provide us with the resources we need to help our youth.”

Chief Roger William, Vice-Chair Tsilhqot'in National Government

“This issue goes very deep. We need to make sure that all of our communities come together. Our Nenqay Deni Accord does have a justice component to address this reality but we need an interim process that addresses the immediate issues.”

“For years, our communities have been having peace keeping circles, gatherings, and other cultural events that connect our youth with our Elders and cultural practices while getting out on the land. We need resources to ensure this learning of traditional knowledge and practice is bolstered to support our youth.”

Chief Bernie Mack, ?Esdilagh First Nation

“We need to be helping those youth at risk who find themselves without any options. Along with cultural and social support we also need leaders to provide jobs for our youth. We need to ensure our troubled youth are employable – with their grade 12 and driver’s license.”

Chief Ervin Charleyboy – Tsi Deldel First Nation

“We need to revamp our whole justice system and address the challenges that we are facing out here. The Tsilhqot’in will be establishing our own committee to come up with a strategy that works for us.”

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