



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## First Nation Community Gets Hit Hard with High Crime Rates

**Eabametoong First Nation, ON** (Wednesday July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008) - The First Nation community of Eabametoong (Fort Hope) today announced their on-going struggle with inadequate policing infrastructure as negotiations with Nishnawbe-Aski Police Services (NAPS) have stalled due to the lack of provincial and federal funding. Community leaders of this remote First Nation are fearful of the ramifications the stalled negotiations will have on the already increasing crime rate as the call to meet supply and demand goes unanswered.

Chief Soloman Atlookan, Eabametoong First Nation says, "Because of the lack of man power to stop crime from happening, the people in my community live in fear. They see first hand what people are getting away with. We are entitled to have sufficient police officers on duty at all times. Currently, we have one on duty and occasionally two! How do we lower our crime rate and enforce the law if we have no one to do it with? The saying 'getting away with murder' is too close to becoming a reality in our community!"

Recently, the temporary police detachment in Eabametoong First Nation experienced severe smoke damage due to a fire within the shared unit of the residential duplex. The station does not meet operational standards and is grossly inadequate and quickly deteriorating as the officers are forced to work and live in an insufficient environment.





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Other Nishnawbe Aski community leaders are also exploring alternate options of housing for the officers and alternate space for detachments. Lack of funding leaves the First Nations falling short of community protection due to inadequate police enforcement.

Eabametoong First Nation is located 360 kilometers north of Thunder Bay, ON.

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