



Nibinamik First Nation
General Delivery
Summer Beaver, ON P0T 3B0

MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

For Immediate Release

NIBINAMIK FIRST NATION OUTRAGED BY VIOLENCE BY THUNDER BAY POLICE AGAINST COMMUNITY YOUTH

Summer Beaver, ON: Responding to an incident caught on video that occurred on Saturday, December 1st that appeared to show a female Uniform Patrol Officer of the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) striking a youth member of our community, Nibinamik First Nation Chief Johnny Yellowhead offered the following statement:

“As Chief of Nibinamik First Nation, I wish to express my outrage at the violence done to one of our young women at the hands of the Thunder Bay Police Department this past weekend. It is entirely inexcusable. There is no possible justification for such an action of assault against a youth by a person in a position of power and authority.

Police are meant to protect people from violence, yet what is clear from this indefensible act is that some are the very ones perpetrating it against our communities, our youth, and our young women. For this act of violence to come on the heels of the Seven Youth Inquest looking into the deaths of our children and youth sent to Thunder Bay for an education, and during a time when the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls—mandated to look into all forms of violence against Indigenous women—is occurring in Canada is incredibly disheartening. These are clear calls to take action against violence—towards Indigenous women, youth, and girls, and specifically for violence against our children in Thunder Bay. It is reprehensible that they appear to be unheeded and ignored.

This act of unjustifiable violence adds to a long and sorry history of racist actions and violent behaviour by members of the Thunder Bay Police against Indigenous people. If we cannot trust them to act with basic human dignity and without disproportionate violence towards a young woman receiving medical attention, how can we trust them to investigate and transparently report on this matter?

On behalf of Nibinamik First Nation, I echo the calls for an independent inquiry and investigation into the police conduct and this violence done to one of our community members. These acts of violence against our community members in Thunder Bay by the police must end.

We will be writing to the Thunder Bay Police Department, as well as to the Government of Ontario about this atrocity and the need for it to be addressed in a full and transparent manner. If the police will not take the necessary steps to protect our young women and keep our children safe in Thunder Bay, then Nibinamik First Nation will be looking to the Governments of Ontario and Canada to work with us on a government-to-government basis to act to protect our children.

Our children are gifts from the Creator. They are the future of our communities and must be honoured, respected, and cherished. As Indigenous people there is no responsibility more sacred than ensuring that our children are safe. Nibinamik has been in contact with the young woman's family and are following up to ensure they receive the support and care they need in the wake of this injustice."

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Note to media: Thank you for your interest but there will be no media availability to accompany this statement.