



# The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

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Regional Council 15  
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Date: September 21, 2020

## **STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY FROM REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL 15, THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

We stand in solidarity with Mi'kmaq fishers attempting to exercise their inherent right to fish for a "moderate livelihood" under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution and the 1752 Peace and Friendship Treaty, as affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in *R v. Marshall 1999*.

We are appalled at the violence and racial discrimination Mi'kmaq fishers from Sipekne'katik First Nation and their supporters are currently experiencing in Saulnierville, NS as they try to exercise their rights.

**We call on the Canadian government to uphold the treaty rights and work diligently to pursue measures to ensure that Mi'kmaq fishers may fish peacefully for a "moderate livelihood".**

In 1986, the United Church of Canada made its first appeal to the federal and, where appropriate, provincial governments to clarify, strengthen, and guarantee Indigenous peoples' inherent rights to a fishery, and further to do so in full consultation with Indigenous peoples. (1986N135)

In 2000, as Mi'kmaq fishers in Esgeoopetitj FN (Burnt Church, NB) suffered violence and discrimination from non-Mi'kmaq fishers and also from agents of the federal government, the United Church of Canada once again urged the Canadian government to act in accordance with the treaties and the Supreme Courts affirmation of the inherent rights of the Mi'kmaq fishers. (2000-11-29-0086)

It is a disgrace, that 34 years later, we are reiterating those earlier appeals and that the Mi'kmaq people are still not able to fish in "peace and friendship"!

We acknowledge the racism and deeply held colonial systems that allow this to continue, and commit to our own ongoing work to dismantle these oppressive systems where we encounter them in our midst.

We recognize and affirm that "we are all treaty people", and thus we carry our own responsibilities to make every effort to uphold the treaties and to continue to seek ways to live in Peace and Friendship.

In faith,

**Janet Sollows**  
President,  
Regional Council 15

**Rev. Faith March-MacCuish**  
Executive Minister  
Regional Council 15