

INTERFAITH COALITION *for* TREATY RIGHTS

—Statement regarding the Mi'kmaw Fishery—

Who we are: A concerned group of individuals and representatives of faith communities and social justice organizations in the Maritimes.

Concerns:

- We are concerned about the intention of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to block the Mi'kmaw Fishery that is scheduled to begin on June 1 in Treaty Area One, also known as Lobster Fishery Area 34 (LFA 34).
- We are concerned about the potential for the use of force by the DFO or other government agencies; we do not support such use of force in our name as Canadian citizens.
- We are concerned about the possibility of a reoccurrence of violence against Mi'kmaw fishers and a repeated failure of the RCMP to protect those fishers and their property.

Principles:

- We support the inherent right of Mi'kmaw fishers to fish in a manner of their design and according to their principles of conservation and respect for nature.
- We seek to fulfill our responsibilities as partners in the Peace and Friendship Treaties.
- We seek to live up to the Calls for Action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools and the Commission on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- We seek to honour the principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- We reject the use of violence in all of its forms.
- We acknowledge the importance of livelihood from the lobster fishery for independent, non-Indigenous fishers and their communities.
- We recognize that conservation is essential to enable both the Mi'kmaw and non-Indigenous fisheries to thrive and shared responsibility for conservation requires a respectful nation-to-nation negotiation.

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Calls to Action:

- We call upon the Government of Canada to fully acknowledge the inherent right of Mi'kmaw fishers to fish in a manner of their design and according to their principles of conservation and respect for nature.
- We call upon the Government of Canada to negotiate the terms of a shared fishery with the Mi'kmaw Nation on a nation-to-nation basis.
- We call upon the Government of Nova Scotia to ensure that the RCMP fully carries out its duty to protect Mi'kmaw fishers, other members of the Mi'kmaw community present during the fishery, and their property.
- We call upon faith communities and non-Indigenous communities to honour the principles of the Peace and Friendship Treaties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People by offering support, bearing witness when necessary, and lobbying the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia to live up to their duties.

For more information, contact:

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