



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

**Head office**

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September 18, 2020

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, P.C. M.P  
Prime Minister of Canada  
The Office of the Prime Minister  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A2

**RE: Nova Scotia Fishing Dispute**

Dear Prime Minister,

As you are aware, Prime Minister, the fishing dispute in Nova Scotia has become a dangerous situation for the Mi'kmaq.

Although the fishing rights of the Mi'kmaq are constitutionally protected, non-Indigenous fishers and others feel they have the right, without impunity, to threaten, harass, and bully the Sipekne'kalik First Nation fishers, and to violate their constitutionally-protected rights.

This situation has been further escalated by Minister Jordan and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The lack of action by the Minister only serves to condone the violent actions of those who want to violate the fishing rights of the Sipekne'kalik First Nation.

This is further proof that the Mi'kmaq are not protected by the rule of law in Canada. If the Mi'kmaq were equal under the law, then the laws of Canada would protect the rights of Mi'kmaq people in the same way they protect the rights of non-Indigenous people.

The Supreme Court of Canada addressed and recognized the fishing rights of the Mi'kmaq in the 1999 decision of *R. v. Marshall*. The Supreme Court of Canada recognized the fishing rights of the Mi'kmaq in 1999, so why does the Government of Canada not recognize those rights today?

Fishing is an important part of food security for Mi'kmaq families in Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaq women, as the caregivers of their families, strongly urge the federal government to:

- De-escalate the situation immediately before someone is seriously injured or killed;
- Direct the RCMP and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to take such actions as are necessary to protect the legal fishing rights of the Mi'kmaq fishers;
- Immediately meet with the Nova Scotia First Nations leadership to implement the 1999 *R. v. Marshall* Supreme Court of Canada decision;
- Direct Minister Jordan to immediately remove her highly inappropriate comments from Facebook and to apologize to Nova Scotia First Nations people.



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Mi'kmaq women call upon you, Prime Minister, to protect the fishing rights of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. A first step in reconciliation is the recognition and protection of Mi'kmaq rights in Canada. If we are to embark on a journey of reconciliation in this nation, then it is up to you to take the necessary first steps in this journey.

Best regards,

Lorraine Whitman

President of the Native Women's Association of Canada