

Statement From Concerned Haudenosaunee Women Regarding Injunctions At 1492 Land Back Lane

THIS STATEMENT is issued on behalf of a group of Haudenosaunee women who are opposed to the use of injunctions against our people, who are exercising our sovereignty over our land.

Haudenosaunee have maintained our distinct worldview and ceremonial practices despite generations of colonial violence and violations of our rights. Our traditions and cultural knowledge are a sacred inheritance that we have an absolute right to practice. We have the responsibility to protect this inheritance for our future generations.

In accordance with our worldview, all matters regarding land are the responsibility of the women. As caretakers and stewards of the land, women play a vital role in governance and decision-making.

Courts violate and criminalize the rights and responsibility of our women by preventing us from fulfilling our responsibilities to the land and our future generations in accordance with Haudenosaunee Law.

We must also speak to the emotional and spiritual harm that these injunctions bring to our people. Our people should never have to suffer emotional distress for engaging in traditional laws and customs and the land should never have to suffer from the absence of our caretaking.

We denounce this system for sowing violence and disrupting the peace within our community.

We are rightful title holders, and injunctions deny us our inherent right to our land. Injunctions also authorize police violence against our people. Our sovereignty is inherent while Canada's perceived authority is a product of violent colonialism and genocide. Injunctions seek to make this reality invisible, a tool of the court to sanction more violence and dispossession.

We oppose the broad use of injunctions that are meant to stifle our people from seeking justice.

Court decisions which prevent Haudenosaunee people from engaging in our cultural practices impact all future generations of Haudenosaunee children. It is our responsibility to protect the inheritance of our children and we will fulfill this commitment.

These matters are complex and we do not believe this court is the appropriate forum to deliberate our concerns or resolve our issues. We will continue to resist the criminalization of our people and illegitimate development in our territory. We call on the Crown, our allies, to stop the use of injunctions against our people.

BACKGROUND

On July 19, 2020, Haudenosaunee Land Defenders stopped a housing development within the Haldimand Tract. The so-called Mackenzie Meadows became 1492 Land Back Lane. On July 31st, 2020, an interim injunction order was placed on the camp, instructing all Land Defenders to leave and allow construction to resume.

On August 5th, 2020, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) enforced the injunction and brought violence to our community, tasing and shooting rubber bullets, arresting several people, and forcibly removing us from our territory.

In response to this violence, community members blocked roads to ensure ongoing and safe access to 1492 Land Back Lane. Following the OPP enforcement, our presence was re-established at the camp later that day.

On August 7th, Haldimand County was granted an injunction meant to clear roads and railways through our territory and the July 31st interim injunction granted to the developer was made permanent. Injunctions regarding the roads and rail lines are going to be heard in court again on August 25, 2020 and potentially be made permanent as well.

Land Defenders at 1492 Land Back Lane demand respect for our community decisions making and justice for the illegitimate land development in our territory.

We call on our allies to continue amplifying these demands peacefully and safely.

A Note on Authorship

This statement protects the anonymity of the authors in order to limit their risk of criminalization for speaking out against injunctions. Haudenosaunee women who wish to verify the community connections of the authors are invited to contact 1492 Land Back Lane.

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