Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Friday May 23, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN WELCOMES KI RELEASE

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy today welcomed the release of the jailed Kitchenuhumaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) leadership to attend their sentencing appeal at the Ontario Court of Appeal May 28 in Toronto.

"We are pleased that an interim agreement has been reached for the release of the KI leadership," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who greeted the KI leaders at the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre. "It is important that the government work with First Nation leadership on the issues that led to their imprisonment."

KI Chief Donny Morris, Deputy Chief Jack McKay, head councillor Cecilia Begg, councillors Sam McKay, Darryl Sainnawap, and band member Bruce Sakakeep were released following an agreement between KI, the Government of Ontario, and Platinex Inc.

The "KI6" were sentenced to six months in jail March 17 for civil contempt of court after disobeying a court order allowing junior mining exploration company Platinex Inc. to access KI traditional territory. Litigation between KI, Platinex Inc., and the Government of Ontario has been ongoing since Platinex sued the remote First Nation community for $10 billion after they were told to vacate KI traditional land February 2006.

"First Nation leaders should not have to lose their freedom because of the Government of Ontario's failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations," said Beardy. "It is imperative that the province overhaul various provincial legislature that infringe upon Aboriginal and Treaty Rights as per the Supreme Court rulings to consult and accommodate First Nations prior to development."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario.

The KI leadership will be available to media at the Travelodge Hotel Airlane, Salon C from 4 – 6 p.m. today.

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For more information please contact *Kristy Hankila, Acting Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4952 or (807) 629-1512 (mobile).*