



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday May 7, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FUTURE OF FIRST NATION POLICING IN DOUBT

OTTAWA: The two largest First Nation police services in Ontario, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (NAPS) and Anishinabek Police Service (APS), are in Ottawa today to expose underhanded negotiating tactics on policing agreements by the Government of Canada.

“With police services on the brink of not being able to meet payroll, the Government of Canada has pedalled bogus agreements to get First Nations to agree that the federal government are no longer responsible for Aboriginal policing,” said Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who holds the justice portfolio at NAN. “The federal government has used underhanded tactics and bad faith negotiations and has deliberately promoted long-term agreement templates to First Nation police services across the country that will perpetuate the very problems highlighted by the Auditor General.”

A report released yesterday by the Auditor General concluded that First Nation communities in Ontario do not receive the same level of policing that rest of the province does. The report concludes that First Nation police services lack the protection of a legislative framework like other police services; the program is not accessible or transparent to First Nations; there is no meaningful input by First Nations into the negotiation of policing agreements; and First Nations are constantly presented with final agreements and told they would not receive funding unless they sign.

“The federal minister simply refuses to meet, and his closed-door policy is insulting and disrespectful of First Nations,” said Doug Chevrier, Chairperson of the Police Governing Authority for the Anishinabek Police Service. “Had the Government of Ontario not stepped in to support us our service would not have been able to continue operating during this negotiation process, leaving our officers abandoned and the lives of our community members in jeopardy.”

Unlike all other policing institutions in Canada, First Nation police services are not governed by legislation. NAPS and APS are not mandated police services, but are funded as programs through agreements with the federal and provincial government that can be cancelled at any time. There is no funding for permanent detachments or residences, or other vital infrastructure to ensure the safety of officers and community members.

“The Government of Canada is passing the buck on its responsibility for the decrepit detachments in many First Nations. Many First Nations have been jammed into an unfair position and the federal government expects them to assume legal responsibility for facilities that match Ontario Provincial Police standards against a backdrop of decades of chronic underfunding,” said Julian Falconer, legal counsel for APS and NAPS. “First Nation police services are being set up for failure. In order to meet next year’s operating expenses they have to legally release the federal government and take on a legal responsibility the federal government knows they can’t deliver on.”

The instability of policing in First Nation communities is exacerbated by the government’s failure to legislate a regulatory framework. As a result, provincial standards that apply to the OPP and municipal police forces do not apply to First Nation police services, leaving detachments chronically underfunded and under-resourced.

In addition, the lack of legal and financial security is a major barrier to the recruitment and retention of officers and impairs the forces’ ability to secure facilities that meet provincial standards for the safety of our officers and community members.

For more information please contact: Michael Heintzman, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 621-2790 or by email mheintzman@nan.on.ca



Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service

Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (NAPS) is the largest First Nations police service in Canada and the second largest First Nations police service in North America, employing more than 134 uniform officers and 30 civilians. Based in Thunder Bay, NAPS polices 35 communities across NAN territory, which encompasses nearly two-thirds of the Province of Ontario.



Anishinabek Police Service

Anishinabek Police Service (APS) provides policing services to 16 First Nation communities across nearly two-thirds of Ontario, from Kettle & Stony Point First Nation in the south to Fort William First Nation in the north. Headquartered in Garden River First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie, APS operates 12 detachments with 62 sworn officers and 21 civilian members.



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.