



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday February 7, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOINT STATEMENT ON DEATHS OF FORT ALBANY MEMBERS FOLLOWING ALTERCATIONS WITH POLICE

TIMMINS, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, and Fort Albany First Nation Chief Andrew Solomon have issued the following statement regarding two Fort Albany members who have died following altercations with Timmins Police Service over the past few days:

“We are shocked that two Fort Albany members have died at the hands of police. We are very troubled by these tragedies and our thoughts and prayers are with the families and Fort Albany community. We do not yet know all the facts around these altercations but encourage the Special Investigations Unit and the Chief Coroner of Ontario to get to the bottom of these incidents without delay. Our people must continually leave their families and communities to come to cities to seek service that are not available in their respective communities. We have seen systemic racism in the City of Thunder Bay, and must now wonder if this is also happening in Timmins. We expect the respective ministries and officials to take these concerns seriously and work with the families of the deceased, the Fort Albany community, the Mushkegowuk Council, and the City of Timmins.”

Joey Knapaysweet, 21, had been living in Timmins to access medical services not available in Fort Albany. According to reports, on Saturday (February 3) he had an interaction with Timmins police which led to him being tasered and ultimately shot and killed by the police.

Agnes Sutherland, 62, used a wheelchair and suffered from health complications. It is alleged that when police attended at the scene of the local shelter Ms. Sutherland was treated roughly while being taken into police custody. She suffered severe complications during her detention and ultimately was taken to hospital where she died Sunday evening (February 4).

Chief Andrew Solomon has addressed these concerns to the Attorney General for Ontario and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. He has called for an investigation into the actions of the Timmins Police Service as they relate to the deaths of Joey Knapaysweet and Agnes Sutherland.

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