



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT BY INDIGENOUS SENATORS REGARDING RECENT EVENTS IN OTTAWA

(Ottawa, February 5, 2022) – Senators Dawn Anderson, Michèle Audette, Yvonne Boyer, Patrick Brazeau, Brian Francis, Marty Klyne, Patti LaBoucane-Benson, Sandra Lovelace Nicholas and Mary Jane McCallum issued the following statement in response to the continued escalation and occupation in Ottawa:

“We strongly support everyone's right to protest in a peaceful manner. However, we cannot stand with or for intolerance, hate or violence of any kind.

We are extremely disturbed by the events that have unfolded in Ottawa over the past week. The display of racist and hateful symbols have prompted profound shock and outrage across the country, as well as caused great hurt to our Indigenous brothers and sisters and members of other communities.

We gratefully acknowledge and honour the Algonquin Anishinaabe People on whose unceded and unsundered land our offices are located, and lend our voices and support to the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, who have condemned the complete lack of respect some individuals have shown for their sacred ceremonies and protocols and called for the end of any movement that compromises the safety of their community members.

We are furthermore troubled by the desecration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument which honour those who have served and sacrificed so much to protect the rights and freedoms that Canadians hold dear. It is a grave insult to all of us but especially veterans and active service members as well as their families.

These behaviours and attitudes have no place in a modern and diverse democracy such as Canada. We find them utterly impossible to justify, nor do we understand how anyone in good conscience can openly support them.

We extend our sympathy to businesses in Ottawa that have been working hard to make ends meet during the pandemic and now face added hardships, and we stand with local residents whose lives have been disrupted and endangered during an increasingly hostile and volatile situation.

We are particularly concerned for the welfare of marginalized and vulnerable individuals whose access to critical services has been interrupted by the occupation downtown. We recognize the added burden placed on front-line service providers who have been working diligently to offer care and support to these residents. We thank them for continuing to do so while following health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on Indigenous Peoples across this country. Many of our communities have imposed strict measures to ensure the health and safety of their members during this very serious and ongoing crisis.

Hate, bigotry, racism and intimidation have no place in democratic protest. We call for a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ottawa that respects the original inhabitants of the land we gather on.”



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