

March 10, 2020

- For Immediate Release -

TYENDINAGA MOHAWK TERRITORY - FROM THE BEAR CLAN IN TYENDINAGA

This statement is in response to the letter that was drafted on March 1, 2020 signed by the community Turtle Clan Mother, Kanonhsyonne Janice Hill, Nation Secretary, and Well holder at Tyendinaga. Her letter was released as the message from the "Tyendinaga Longhouse Women's Council" which stated in part:

"...We have however grown concerned by the recent escalation of the disturbance of the peace in our community. The current demonstration was never sanctioned as a Tyendinaga Longhouse matter, however it has come to our attention that the instigator, Seth Lefort is publicly misrepresenting himself and his place in this community in relation to the longhouse.

Seth Lefort does not have a voice in our longhouse, that privilege was revoked by the people when he was found to have committed actions and behaviours that were disruptive to the peace of our community, and therefore deemed to be in direct violation of the teachings of the Kayanere'ko:wa. As a result he was removed from the house following a process as outlined in the Kayanere'ko:wa.

It is our responsibility, as the Onkwehon:we of Kenhte:ke and as Rotinonhsyon:ni, to conduct ourselves in a way that is consistent with the values laid out for us in the Kayanere'ko:wa: peace, a good mind and collective strength. Our way is being of a clear mind and striving for peace and unity; as such our Rotisken'rakehte ' carry the burden of peace' not war."

The first portion of our letter is intended to clear up any confusion or misrepresentation regarding Kanenhariyo (Seth LeFort) of the Tahanakari:ne title of the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) at Tyendinaga.

Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) at Tyendinaga sent Kanenhariyo to Wet'suwet'en Territory to meet with their Hereditary Chiefs, to ask them some questions about their intentions that we had an interest in understanding. Upon Kanenhariyo's return, the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) met and it was passed that any Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) people of Tyendinaga who desired to travel to assist Wet'suwet'en people on the ground at the anticipated conflict zone or to participate in any actions that were to arise that they would be supported and encouraged by the Clan. As a Clan we completely support, encourage, and are proud of all of our men and women who made stands and continue in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en.

The second paragraph of the above message is a fabrication of history. Kanonhsyonne (Janice C. Hill) has greatly offended the bear clan and damaged the reputation of Kanenhariyo's (Seth LeFort) name by speaking on behalf of the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) and speaking out about individual members status in the nation without any substantiation or evidence. Kanonhsyonne (Janice C. Hill) did not have the support of the Bear Clan to draft or publish this letter regarding the status of Kanenhariyo, a Bear Clan member. This is the responsibility of his Clan family, not a secretary or a Turtle Clan Mother. She has acted in a malicious manner that resulted in the-

manipulation of her responsibility as nation secretary within the community. Further more when someone within the nation is given a responsibility by the people they are vested with a trust, relied upon by all the people. Kanonhsyonne has violated the sacred trust that has been placed on her by the people. We believe because ones name is the connecting factor that afford one shelter under the tree and protection and rights within our lands and treaties. This Letter Signed and distributed by Kanonhsyonne Janice Hill claiming Kanenhariyo no longer has a voice, is now a national matter, to be dealt with by the people. The Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) are extremely disappointed and offended by the false accusations that were made regarding Kanenhariyo outlined in the letter dated, signed and made available to the public March 1st 2020.

No protocols of the Kayanere'ko:wa have been followed to remove the voice of Kanenhariyo. Kanenhariyo's name has never been taken from him, and he was raised within our Clan and educated with the Kayanere'ko:wa.

It is the understanding of the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) that when an issue is raised regarding the behaviour of an individual, that the offended Clans or party follow the process stated below, progressing through the steps if the issue is not resolved:

1. Raise the issue with the person.
2. Raise the issue with the Clan family of the individual.
3. Raise the issue with the Clan mother. If there is no Clan mother in the community, the Clan people are notified of the disturbance and the people shall discuss options for resolution.
4. If the issue is not resolved and the offence is deemed large enough to affect the Nation, then it is taken to Mohawk Council.

It is the understanding of the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) that there are only three crimes that an individual can be exiled/banished for. These crimes are: murder, rape and treason. Our understanding of treason is an act which intends to hack away at the roots of the tree and compromises the shelter and protection of the people as outlined in the Kayanere'ko:wa. As people of the Kayanere'ko:wa we do not "revoke" membership, it is not a club.

In the case where the behaviour is not one of the three acts (murder, rape, treason) that would warrant exile, there may be opportunities for the people to council and minimize the longterm damage caused by an individual's actions. To date no specific actions have ever been raised to the rotiskarewake at Tyendinaga to warrant his voice removed or exiled and his name removed.

No offended party has stepped forward to directly accuse Kanenhariyo with evidence of a crime. Kanenhariyo was never addressed personally by an offended party. Neither his mother, Kanaktiyohstha (Linda LeFort) or sha'teri (F. Gene Hill), were addressed of any concerns. The Tahane'karine Clan family at Tyendinaga was not notified nor was his larger Clan family. The accusations were never brought before council. Kanenhariyo was never summoned to speak to any accusations in an open council.

As the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan), we would like to clarify our position regarding our brother and son Kanenhariyo. He does have a voice in the nation and he continues to work in a way that advances Nation to Nation relationships. Kanenhariyo is a valuable asset to our Clan and Nation. We have not agreed to remove his name or silence him, and he is to be treated with the full respect and dignity as any one else living with the full protection of the Kayanerehkowa.

It is our understanding as the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan people) of Tyendinaga that the Kayanere'ko:wa is the law of the land and is not exclusive to the four walls of any building. It is also our understanding that the Kahsenna'on:we (traditional name) affords the individual the rights, privileges and protection under the shelter of the great tree of peace, and all those who

sit under it are expected to keep the peace amongst each other, to be able to maintain relationships that are conducive to sharing resources and caring for each other in times of turmoil. Mohawk names are held by the women of the Clan, and individuals are accountable to them. The Kayenerer'ko:wa applies to everyone and doesn't exclude anyone within the territory.

It is the understanding of the Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan) that Onkwe'hon:we are free people, and do not require sanction or permission for our actions so long as one is upholding their responsibilities within Kayanere'ko:wa, following the customs of the people, and not causing harm on others under the shelter of the Great Tree.

As Rotiskarewake (Bear Clan people), we do not recognize the false allegations made against Kanenhariyo and written and signed by Kanonhsyonne Janice Hill. The letter has created great concern across the Mohawk Nation as it has created doubt in the people and was meant to tarnish Kanenhariyo's reputation. By taking this action she put the Mohawk people of Tyendinaga at risk in a moment of peril, and caused chaos and confusion that put Mohawk people across the nation at risk.

The people's seal was used to authenticate this letter. This "Women's Council" decision was not a peoples decision, and is in contradiction to the decisions of the Rotiskerekahteh Council that has been meeting and that recognizes Kanenhariyo as their War Chief during this very difficult time in Tyendinaga.

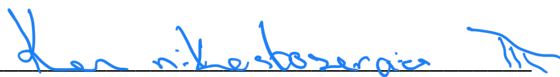
We believe that part of this letter's intent was to undermine the recent decision by the Rotiskerakehte to raise Kanenhariyo as the new Roskenrakehteko:wa Ranonsasteriston (War Chief). This decision was announced at a public meeting and affirmed by putting through the official words at the longhouse in a public forum where any objecting parties were given the opportunity to express any issue or concerns that might change the Rotiskerakehte selection.

We are requesting assistance to resolve these matters in a peaceful way that will help us deal with these false and damaging accusations but more importantly, to ensure that this sort of abuse of power never happens again to another individual, by Clan mother, well keeper, and nation secretary Kanonhsyonne Janice Hill. (we are concerned that's too many responsibilities for one individual to wield)

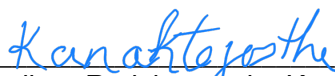
We recognize it's been a long time since a court has been held in accordance to our customs and Kayanerehkowa; We are therefore seeking to hold a Mohawk peoples council to be hosted by our brethren the Mohawks of the Grand River Territory, to discuss together the procedures for holding court on this type of matter and to set a date and location as to where the hearing shall be held. And we ask that this meeting occurs in a reasonable time frame, hopefully within the next 30 days. So that a peoples court date and preparations can be set in the following weeks. We respectfully ask that we search out the knowledge keepers to attend these meetings to help guide this process in a positive and way consistent with the Kayanerehkowa.



Tahanakarineh, Rotiskarewake Sha'teri F. Gene Hill



Tahanakarineh Rotiskarewake Ken'nikastohtsera'a Jamie Kunkle



Tahana'karihne Rotiskarewake Kanaktiyohstha Linda LeFort