

STRENGTH

PEACE

UNITY

Mohawk Council of Kahnawake

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OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS



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January 29, 2025

President
The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500.

Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton (Greetings) Mr. President,

On behalf of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, I take this opportunity to properly address you as the newly elected 47th President of the United States of America.

The history between our Nations goes back centuries and continues to be interwoven to this day. Mohawk Ironworkers have been, and continue to be, integral in building the skyline of the United States and we take great pride in those achievements. Also of note, many of our members have joined and continue to join, the United States Marine Corps (USMC), the United States Army, the United States Navy (USN) and the United States Air Force (USAF) and have served alongside Americans in every war and armed conflict that involved the U.S. military.

We have observed your public statements regarding the "US-Canada border" and concerns regarding the increase in undocumented and illegal immigrants. We must emphasize that this border between the US and Canada is not one that applies to Mohawks. We participate in discussions with both US and Canadian officials in order to protect our rights and our communities with respect to border crossing. Any policies aiming to protect the US from the influx of these undocumented and illegal immigrants must not impact our people and our rights. Furthermore, any purported ideas of Canada becoming the 51st state would be impossible as much of the country is still unceded First Nation land and these interests have not been considered. This notion that just because the United States and Canada erected an imaginary line to distinguish yourselves from one another does not extend to First Nations, the original occupants and stewards of lands on both sides of this trivial border.

We would therefore like to continue working together as historic allies to address not only these longstanding items, but to also explore future opportunities.

We have discussed potential economic opportunities with the Consul General Robert P. Sanders from the US Embassy in Montreal and propose we continue to explore such possibilities together.

We await your response and the opportunity to contribute to the positive development of relations between our Peoples.

In Peace and Friendship,

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CHIEFS



Ohén:ton I:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs
Grand Chief of Kahnawake

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January 28, 2025

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton (Greetings) Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK), I write to you compelled by the recent news articles stating your request for Indigenous support in standing up to the United States. While this government and its predecessors have often overlooked our community's fundamental rights, it appears you are now calling upon us for assistance without having first shown respect for our inherent authority or our community's concerns.

We have repeatedly requested a meeting with you to discuss our longstanding issues and priorities. To date, we have received no meaningful response. Instead, you continue to engage primarily with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), an organization that is simply an advocacy body and nothing more. They do not hold our unique rights nor speak on behalf of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. Our community speaks for itself, and as the actual rights holders, we insist upon direct dialogue with you rather than through the AFN, or other organizations.

Your exclusion of First Nations from the so-called "Team Canada" strategy, while simultaneously urging us to "stand together" against the United States, underlines a recurring colonial mindset: Canada makes decisions without our participation or involvement, yet appeals to us when in need of our leverage and support. The reality is that this is "colonizers versus colonizers," seeking once again to drag First Nations into a fight that does not prioritize or respect our sovereignty. Perhaps, in the face of this disregard, First Nations should sit this one out.

Over two centuries ago, in accordance with upholding our treaty commitments, the Mohawk aligned as allies with the British Crown, and subsequently Canada, against the United States during the War of 1812. Our people have joined Canada's military and supported Canada in every war and military conflict involving Canada. In return, we have been subjected to genocide, targeted legislation and policies aiming to erase our identity, and ongoing attempts to erode and seize our lands our rights, and our past. Our history reflects relations as allies degrading to one of broken promises and systemic injustices. If Canada truly wants our help at this critical point, our community's position is clear: Canada must demonstrate commitments to correct past wrongs and address the pressing needs of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. Mere words and photo-ops are no longer acceptable; substantive and concrete actions are immediately required.

We wish to make it clear that, due to the continued marginalization of our nation's concerns, Kahnawà:ke is actively reaching out to our own contacts in the United States. Our relationships south of the border are based on our community's well-being and objectives, not on serving as an ancillary to Canada's political strategy. We have learned that we must protect our own interests rather than relying on governments that fail to meet even the most basic obligations they owe to Indigenous peoples.

Prime Minister, you now ask for our support against economic and political threats from the United States. Yet our requests for proper engagement have remained unanswered. We are thus proposing that our governments work together, to find ways to maintain and foster peaceful co-existence and alliance.

In closing, we reiterate our demand for direct discussions focused on addressing historic and ongoing injustices, including the erosion of our lands and the undermining of our nationhood. We require an immediate meeting between us directly, and not between delegates, before any support is given.

Without these steps, your calls for unity are meaningless.

Respectfully,

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CHIEFS



Ohén:ton Irate ne Ratitsénhaienhs
Grand Chief of Kahnawake

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