October 20, 2020 |

Statements

BC Federation of Labour calls for immediate action to protect Mi'kmaq fishers and their rights

On behalf of the more than 500,000 members of our affiliate unions, the BC Federation of Labour calls upon the federal government to take immediate action to protect Mi’kmaq fishers from the violent, racist attacks that they have endured at the hands of non-Indigenous commercial fishers.

The treaty rights of the Mi’kmaq fishers to a moderate livelihood have been upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada. Our federal government is bound by law to enforce those rights, including preventing further violence and restoring peace for Indigenous fishers.

Reports of the RCMP’s failure to protect Mi’kmaq fishers are unacceptable and exemplify the kinds of systemic racism faced by Indigenous rights bearers in Canada. We call upon Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet to rectify this gross injustice without delay.

The BCFED and the labour movement across Canada stand with the Mi’kmaq fishers in their pursuit of justice, dignity and respect. The federal government must uphold treaty rights and the rule of law — in the immediate term by enforcing the peace and avoiding further violence, and through good-faith negotiations with the Sipekne’katik First Nation to reach a durable resolution to the dispute over the lobster fishery.

Ultimately, a lasting solution relies on respect and justice. We reiterate our call on the federal government to urgently heed the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ensure full respect for the rights of all Indigenous peoples.

In solidarity,

W. Laird Cronk, President

Sussanne Skidmore, Secretary-Treasurer