

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**  
Assembly of Nova Scotia  
**Mi'kmaw Chiefs**

## **DFO's Systemic Racism Results in Inhumane Actions**

Yesterday, there was an incident involving Mi'kmaw harvesters and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The harvesters' gear and clothing were seized and DFO's Conservation and Protection Officers (C&P) left them without footwear or phones, hours away from home. Today, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs (Assembly) met and discussed the incident.

"The way these individuals were treated was absolutely unacceptable and inhumane," said Chief Wilbert Marshall, Co-Lead of Fisheries for the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs. "DFO understands our people's distrust with their department and these appalling interactions between DFO and our harvesters will not be allowed to continue. This is not an isolated incident and shows how the systemic racism within DFO and the federal government must be addressed."

Under no circumstances should a government representative endanger the lives of the people they serve. The Assembly is demanding that the officers involved in this incident be immediately terminated from their positions.

"Canada speaks of reconciliation and then employs people who treat our people like this," continued Chief Marshall. "The job of C&P is to maintain safety and order. These actions did not have anyone's safety in mind."

The Assembly is trying to deal with the matter, on the political level, as quickly as information becomes available. They encourage community members who are harassed or impacted in similar ways to always make those incidents public.

"Keeping quiet on these situations only leads to officers like this feeling like they can get away with their actions. We need to put a spotlight on these disgusting behaviours, so they stop," said Chief Marshall.

The Assembly is also calling for an emergency meeting with the Minister of DFO to address these actions and to express their frustrations with how her staff is behaving.

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