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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK deeply concerned with passage of Canada's C-51 'anti-terrorism' legislation

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 11, Ohiarí:ha/June 2015) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform Kahnawà'kehró:non that Canada's Senate has officially passed Bill C-51, more commonly known as the 'Anti-Terrorism Act,' into legislation yesterday.

The MCK has had great concerns regarding C-51 since it was proposed. While the MCK shares concerns over the threat of terrorism, the C-51 legislation has questionable uncertainty. The legislation is intended to protect Canada from terrorism but many people, especially First Nations, are concerned that there are few, if any, safeguards to protect the right to legitimate protest.

"It is clear that the Harper government has not heard, or refuses to hear, the concerns of thousands of people," said Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle, Jr. "While we share concerns over the threat of terrorism, there is great fear that the overriding powers being afforded to Canada's law enforcement agencies could be used to specifically target and criminalize First Nations peoples. Freedom of speech, protests or civil disobedience could be curtailed in the interest of alleged national security."

"Many First Nations, including Kahnawà:ke, are political by nature and often are left with no other option but to speak out through protests, solidarity marches, etc." he added. "We don't consider ourselves as paranoid, but little has been done to reassure our people that we will not be targeted or labelled as terrorists."

"The Harper government needs to do better," Grand Chief Delisle concluded. "When it comes to First Nations, it seems that this government goes out of its way to alienate our people further, instead of making better efforts to mend the many broken fences that need fixing."

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