



STATEMENT

FIRST NATION LEADER CALLS UPON CARNIVAL BAND TO RECALL DISRESPECTFUL INDIGENOUS OUTFIT FROM THE 2017 TORONTO CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL

OTTAWA (May 3, 2017) --- A First Nation leader is calling for a traditional Indigenous headdress and outfit be withdrawn from the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, which is marking its theme to mark Canada's 150th year of Confederation, because it sends a derogatory message about Indigenous culture and women.

“Indigenous people are not the ones that are misconstruing history. This is not only about the disrespect to our regalia, our beliefs, and the cultural significance of the headdress itself,” said Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish. “It is also about the underlying messaging that the themed costume worn by the women in the photograph continues to perpetuate sexualized violence against Indigenous women during this time of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry.”

“As Chairperson for both the Ontario First Nations Women's Caucus and the Assembly of First Nations Women's Council and on their behalf, I am respectfully requesting that the use of our traditional headdress and costume be withdrawn from the Toronto Caribbean Carnival. To continue portraying women in this light is offensive to all Indigenous women worldwide.”

“While this is disheartening, we continue to work to end all forms of violence against Indigenous women through the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Women and Girls, the United Nations Committee to End Discrimination Against Women and the publication *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*.”

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The Chiefs of Ontario is an advocacy forum, and a secretariat for collective decision making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nation communities located within the boundaries of the province of Ontario, Canada.

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