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Dene Nation Calls for Immediate Action to address Systemic Racism in Policing; in support of Chief Allan Adam and others

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Yellowknife, Northwest Territories – June 10, 2020] – On March 10, 2020 Chief Allan Adam of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation was arrested outside of Fort McMurray which left Chief Adam nearly unconscious and bleeding excessively from the face. Chief Adam states the incident began when police noticed his truck had an expired license plate and excessive force was used on himself, following his wife’s unnecessary apprehension from the vehicle. The Dene Nation stands with Chief Adam and supports his calls for the RCMP to release the corresponding dashcam footage.

“Today, I spoke with Minister McKenna and reminded her that the Prime Minister continuously states ‘no relationship is more important to Canada than the relationship with Indigenous peoples’,” said National Chief Yakeleya. “Yet, we cannot have a nation-to-nation relationship based on respect, partnership, and a recognition of rights when the institutions designed to keep society safe are the same ones perpetuating the colonial attitudes and abuse that were designed to destroy our individual cultures and humanities. There is systemic racism in policing across Canada, period”.

The RCMP has a historical role in removing First Nation children from their homes and placing them in residential schools and helped in the process of moving First Nations peoples onto reserves to free up land for settlers, leaving a legacy of a complicated and fragile relationship between Mounties and First Nations. In 2017, the RCMP acknowledged that more than one-third of people shot dead by their officers over a 10-year period were Indigenous.

“I am grateful that the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team will be conducting an independent investigation into the police brutality against Chief Adam. However, just last week - I spoke on two independent inquiries: The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’ Calls to Justice one-year anniversary, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action five-year anniversary; two blueprints, no action. We need immediate action. We deserve immediate action for Chief Adam. We need immediate action for Chantel Moore. We need immediate action to keep First Nations safe from police across the Denendeh and Canada,” concluded Yakeleya.

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