



Press Release

Call for Justice Over Alberta Métis Men Killed While Exercising S.35 Hunting Rights

April 1, 2020 (Ottawa ON) - Two Métis men, Jake Sansom, 39, and Morris Cardinal, 57, were killed by gunfire outside of their truck while hunting north of Glendon, Alberta¹. The two men had recently lost their employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and were exercising their Section 35 right to hunt in order to feed their families while waiting for financial relief.

In the wake of incidents such as the shooting of Colten Boushie, the introduction of dangerous “Stand Your Ground” laws that encourage use of lethal violence, and growth of hate groups outlined in the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV) 2019 report, Indigenous people increasingly fear for their lives in rural areas.

“On behalf of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and all of our membership, I wish to express my profound sorrow for the loss of these two members of the Alberta Métis community, and disgust at those who took their lives” said CAP National Chief Robert Bertrand. “No one should ever fear for their lives while putting food on the table for their families. The risk of a hate crime must be investigated in this incident.”

Despite federal and provincial governments promising support for those who lost their jobs due to COVID-19, the families of both men had not yet received any financial support. The uncertainties around financial relief prompted them to exercise their hunting rights in order to ensure their families were able to eat. According to the brother of the deceased, “[they] didn’t have much money left for groceries while he waited for the government’s financial reliefs to kick in, so he and his uncle went hunting.”

“They did everything right; they were exercising their constitutional Section 35 rights to make sure their families and community were cared for” said CAP National Vice Chief Kim Beaudin. “All Indigenous people grieve their loss. We pray to the creator to protect our people struggling to provide for their families during COVID-19. If government had been listening to Indigenous people on the ground, financial support might have rolled out fast enough that these men could still be with us today”

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¹ <https://calgarysun.com/news/crime/2-killed-rural-alberta-road-hunting-covid19-layoffs/wcm/7357a748-f98d-4be0-b637-a1ae35faaf47>

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and nonstatus Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off reserve.