



Press Statement

CAP Calls for Immediate Release of Indigenous Women Wrongfully Imprisoned for 28 Years

OTTAWA, May 18, 2021 – For over 28 years, Indigenous sisters Odelia and Nerissa Quewezance have been imprisoned as a result of wrongful conviction in the murder of Anthony Joseph Dolf. Despite a lack of physical evidence, and the testimony of Jason Keshane stating he was responsible for the murder in 1993, Odelia and Nerissa have remained in prison. While Keshane received a four-year sentence for second-degree murder, the two women were handed life-sentences.

Statement by Congress of Aboriginal Peoples National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin:

“There has been a complete miscarriage of justice in this case, and it speaks volumes how Canada can continue to imprison these Indigenous women despite a lack of evidence as to their involvement. These women have maintained their innocence, and appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada without their case being seriously considered. It’s time senior federal decision makers got involved in this case, and I’m going over Justice Minister Lametti to ask Prime Minister Justin Trudeau why it is acceptable to have two innocent Indigenous women in prison.”

The non-profit legal organization Innocence Canada is currently supporting Odelia and Nerissa in the challenge to prove their innocence. Innocence Canada has said that statements used in the conviction have been called into question, as the women declined to give statements without their lawyers present. Prison advocate David Milgard has also been involved in the push to exonerate the sisters.

Statement by Odelia Quewezance:

“My sister and I should not have received a life sentence for a crime we didn't commit. We were treated unfairly from the beginning as young Indigenous women living in Saskatchewan. Someone else has confessed to this horrific murder and still the justice system fails us. That person admitted to lying multiple times and still I sit in prison. My three girls miss their mother and I should be home with them. I feel exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally, and now is the time for my release after almost 30 years.”

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is calling for the immediate release of the two women pending a re-trial given the facts which are known today. “Odelia and Nerissa have suffered enough at the hands of the Canadian justice system, and they must be cleared of all wrongdoing in this case” added National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. “We’re not going to let the Canadian Government off the hook with a declaration of time-served, there must be a formal apology, and they must have their records expunged. This case would not have received a guilty verdict by today’s standards.”

**CONGRESS OF
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**



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Background

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is the second-oldest national aboriginal organization in Canada. It was founded in 1971, one year after the AFN. CAP represents the interests of off reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples throughout Canada. CAP is one of five national Indigenous organizations recognized by the federal government, and holds consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.