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Office of Grand Chief Garrison Settee

Press Release

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For Immediate Release
February 7, 2019
4:30 p.m. CST

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg Manitoba – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Grand Chief Garrison Settee was astonished by a news article released by the CBC titled “Mother of newborn apprehended in live video had history of child neglect and drugs”. The CBC news story contained information that was disclosed in a Winnipeg Court hearing on Wednesday February 6, 2019.

The apprehension of the two-day-old baby by Winnipeg Child and Family Services (CFS) on January 10, 2019 was originally shared on Facebook Live, and has sparked a reaction by many First Nation leaders and community members.

MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee shared “I am concerned with the information shared by the recent CBC news story disclosing confidential information about a child, the mother, the family and our First Nation community. The CBC article appears to justify the actions taken by Winnipeg CFS in the practice of issuing birth alerts that leads to an apprehension-first approach with respect to First Nation families involved in the CFS system”.

War Lake First Nation Chief Betsy Kennedy who also sits on the AMC Women’s Council and holds the Child Welfare Portfolio with MKO stated “Child Welfare is changing in Manitoba as we speak. We as Manitoba First Nation leadership is currently preparing legislative change with the Federal government which will uphold our inherent Family Law jurisdiction. We as a Nation have practiced the ability to safeguard our children for a millennia and we will continue to do so in the future”.

Grand Chief Settee further added “under the CFS Act, a parent can contact CFS for assistance, and that request for help should not be used against them. I remind the media to think carefully about their journalistic responsibility to disclose information arising from the Court hearing. The information that was used for this article was only from the point of view of the Winnipeg CFS Agency.”

“The colonial thinking of stereotyping of our First Nation members needs to stop. We need to educate ourselves and our children on ending the negative legacy of stereotypes so it does not continue in our society and media” concluded Grand Chief Settee.

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~Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 30 First Nation communities in Manitoba’s North since 1981~