



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 16, 2021

BCAFN Supports Heiltsuk Nation's B.C. Human Rights Case Against Vancouver Police Over Racial Profiling and Wrongful Detainment

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – June 16, 2021) – BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) supports Heiltsuk Nation's human rights case against the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) for the wrongful detainment of Maxwell Johnson and his 12 year-old granddaughter outside a Bank of Montreal branch in Vancouver in December 2019. Today the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and Heiltsuk Nation announced Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, former judge and Senior Associate Counsel with Woodward & Company, will be applying to intervene on behalf of UBCIC in the case.

"This is an important court case that will lay bare racial discrimination in policing and justice systems in British Columbia and Canada," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "The VPD's statement of defense is absurd and reveals the depth of systemic racism in our society. The casually imposed acts of oppression on the Elder Maxwell Johnson and his granddaughter demonstrates to each of us how quickly and easily the police will strip us of our dignity and potentially destroy First Nations' lives. The pattern of colonial violence and systemic racism in policing and the justice system must end now."

Also, today the shocking and deeply upsetting [video](#) of the arrest of Elder Maxwell Johnson and his granddaughter by officers from the VPD was released.

Fundraising to help fight racism and support for the legal challenge has been launched by Maxwell Johnson and the Heiltsuk Nation. The campaign titled, [Strong as Cedar](#) invites others to share their experiences of systemic racism in Canada and provides a toolkit for allies.

Important Links:

VIDEO: VPD officers handcuff Heiltsuk man and 12-year-old granddaughter outside bank -

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1909860419766/>

Strong as Cedar campaign - <https://www.strongascedar.ca>

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