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## A Message from Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Chief and Council

Chief Mark B. Hill today issued the following statement on the ongoing land crisis taking place in Caledonia.

“Scano, Sago, Good afternoon,

I hope this message finds everybody safe and in good health.

I’d like to take some time today to address the crisis taking place in Caledonia, where land defenders have gathered.

I have visited the site and will continue to visit to hear from the people on the ground and what they have to say, and to better understand where they are coming from. My goal is to keep an open line of communication and a continuous dialogue between everyone involved.

I’m happy to say that we had some good discussion, and found a lot of common ground. We both agree that the health and safety of everyone involved is the primary concern. We also agree that this needs to be a time of unity for the community of Six Nations in order for us to move forward.

I have also been in contact with Premier Ford, Minister Rickford, as well as Indigenous Services Minister Miller on this issue and hope to continue that conversation over the coming days and weeks.

I have been pleased to see the willingness of everyone to engage on this issue with an open mind, and I encourage all sides and each and every person involved to carefully consider the actions they take and the impacts those actions will have on the situation. We want to be clear that we do not support any actions that would lead to violence and destruction.

Instead, I encourage open and meaningful dialogue guided by empathy, compassion and a true willingness to understand each other.

I also encourage everyone in Ontario and across Canada to listen to the concerns of the Land Defenders, and to learn why the area of land under dispute holds so much cultural and emotional significance for many people in our community.

The issues underpinning this crisis go much deeper and much further than this specific plot of land. It is the result of a colonial history that has silenced and oppressed generations of First Peoples.

I want to thank Mayor Hewitt for acknowledging the extent and the history of this crisis, including the last 27 years, during which our leaders have been following the laws of this country to pursue our land rights with the government of Canada. This is a chance for us to learn from the colonial past, to do this right, and to do it together.

For our part, the Elected Council is spearheading the creation of a table that can foster these conversations in a safe and inclusive environment.

We want to ensure that *every* voice is heard, including those of the entire Six Nations of the Grand River community, local, provincial, and national governments, as well as community representative organizations, and others impacted.

We hope you will join us in finding a path forward that hears and respects everyone involved. Your ideas, knowledge and wisdom will help us develop a process that guides us into the future.

Our current moratorium on any future developments on the tract will remain in place until we establish a threshold that meets the expectations of the community and ensures that every member has the opportunity to not only express their views and concerns, but that those concerns do not fall on deaf ears and are meaningfully addressed.

This is an opportunity for us to come together, to tackle our problems, collectively, and in a way that is consistent with our traditional values of compassion, cooperation, sharing, honesty and integrity. It is an opportunity for us to carry the peace, together.

With that in mind, I commit to keeping the lines of communication open with everyone, and will continue to provide updates via our website and social media channels.

Nya:weh thank you.”

Chief Mark B. Hill

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