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For Immediate Release

HMP inappropriate for Inuk woman, says President Lampe

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe says he's saddened and shocked that a Labrador Inuk woman is being held at Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's simply because she refused to obey an injunction against protesting near the Muskrat Falls site.

"My thoughts are with Beatrice Hunter at this time," says President Lampe. "She was detained for a minor offence, something that pales in comparison to the crime of having her locked up at a correctional facility for men - many of whom are violent offenders."

Ms. Hunter was originally detained at the RCMP lock-up in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on May 29 and eventually sent to St. John's.

"Officials with the Department of Justice and Public Safety decided to move Ms. Hunter to St. John's because of an apparent lack of space at the women's facility in Clarenville. She is not a violent offender, so what's the real reason why she was sent to St. John's? Did politics play a role?"

In a letter dated April 11, 2017, President Lampe called on Premier Dwight Ball to give consideration to requesting Nalcor Energy to drop all criminal and civil actions against the Labrador Land Protectors for events leading up to and on October 26, 2016 at or near the Muskrat Falls site.

"Many of these people feel they have done nothing wrong, but were simply taking action to protect their health, culture and way of life, and, as a result, have been branded criminals. This is very unfortunate and will, without a doubt, add to the growing discontent people have towards Nalcor and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador," the President wrote.

The President received a response to the letter from Attorney General and Justice and Public Safety Minister Andrew Parsons. The Minister indicated that "it is inappropriate for the Attorney General or the Premier to intervene in a prosecution... in a criminal manner."

"Minister Parsons and the Premier, who is supposed to be the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, should be ashamed of what has transpired here," says President Lampe. "Ms. Hunter doesn't belong at Her Majesty's Penitentiary. She should be either moved to a more appropriate facility or released."

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