

Under Canada's constitution, the administration of justice is largely the responsibility of provincial governments. Consequently, in an effort to resolve the confrontation, negotiations with Kanesatake were initiated by the Government of Quebec through its Minister for Native Affairs.

In the last few days, some significant developments have taken place. On July 27, the Quebec Government presented to the Mohawks of Kahnawake and Kanesatake a written seven point proposal designed to resolve the impasse. Among other things, it:

- offers to reduce the police presence in Oka-Kanesatake, simultaneously with relinquishment of weapons by the Mohawks;
- proposes the establishment of a supervisory commission made up of seven members to be chosen jointly by the government of Quebec and the Mohawk Nation, to control and supervise the return to normalcy;
- reaffirms measures to maintain free access to food and make clear that it is not the Quebec Government's policy to restrict access to food and that it never will be. (Needless to say, the Canadian Government does not condone the use of food as a weapon at home or abroad.);
- offers to make the Mohawk Nation a party to the coroner's inquest into the death of the police officer.

The Government of Canada expects to conclude the purchase of the disputed land for use of the Mohawks of Kanesatake this week. The purchase brings to fruition two years of work to rationalize land holdings at Kanesatake and the government is hopeful that these actions will allow for a relaxation of tensions there.

However, the federal government is firm in its resolve that it will not negotiate land questions behind barricades or in the face of armed intimidation. Peaceful discussion and open dialogue is the only route to genuine, lasting resolutions. Dialogue is the Canadian way. The Government of Canada has demonstrated its commitment to finding solutions for the problems at Kanesatake, and it supports fully Quebec's seven point plan for disengagement on both sides and the lowering of tensions.

The Government of Canada announced on July 27 its willingness to negotiate a means of resolving the special land claim of the Mohawks of Kanesatake, with representatives of the community and the Province of Quebec, once normalcy returns to Kanesatake and Kahnawake.

Across the country, the Canadian Government is determined to continue its efforts to cooperate with indigenous leaders to address their concerns, and to work together to improve the conditions of indigenous people in Canada. We will work on areas which indigenous people themselves identify as priorities: the