



Media Release- February 28, 2020

The Ermineskin Cree Nation is aware of the situation that has arisen from an incident involving a racist video that was posted earlier this week, and the events that have arisen in response to the posts.

Recently two videos were posted to social media showing a group of moniyawak youths threatening and mocking an unnamed Indigenous person or persons. This vulgar display of racism is indicative of a deeper issue in the country and in this province. As of press time, the videos are now under investigation and will be dealt with under their jurisdiction.

The Ermineskin Cree Nation and the Nehiyawahk of Maskwacis have been subjected to this type of behavior since contact. We are still here. We have been dealing with this type of behavior for longer than Ponoka, Alberta and Canada were even an idea. And we are still here. We will continue to fight for our right to exist, our right to practice our culture and speak our language. We will not condone threats of violence; we will not escalate the situation with retaliation. We will remain strong in our culture that has been under attack since before these systemic acts of violence against us began.

In this fraught moment in history, I call upon the leaders of central Alberta reserves, municipalities, and cities to condemn acts of racism and to educate themselves on the issues facing Indigenous people, including knowledge of the Treaties. Much of the anger that drives these young men is from biased media that seeks to separate us further without teaching us how to move on together. I ask that the people in my own community allow themselves a moment to think about their own actions going forward. In order to move beyond and heal from this incident we need to embrace our Nehiyaw teachings and to act with kindness. These young men are clearly hurting if they feel the need to lash out. Do not seek retribution. Follow the Nehiyaw values of manatisown (respect) and kisewatsowin (kindness). Our communities are close in proximity, so we must also remember to embrace Wahkohtowin (kinship) with our neighbours. We have more in common than not.

Chief Craig Makinaw
Ermineskin Cree Nation