



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

ABENAKI COUNCIL OF ODANAK DENOUNCES NEW ASSAULT AND REPEATED ACTS OF INTIMIDATION IN VERMONT

Odanak, September 25, 2026 – The Abenaki Council of Odanak strongly condemns the assault of an ally of the Nation that occurred Wednesday evening in Vermont, after a group of individuals attempted to enter a private event attended primarily by undergraduate and graduate students, as well as allies of the Nation.

The event was intended to provide a safe educational space where those in attendance could engage in discussion, ask questions and learn more about Abenaki culture. However, four individuals associated with groups falsely claiming Abenaki identity in Vermont arrived at the location and attempted to gain access to the invitation-only event.

At that point, Representative Troy Headrick, an elected member of the Vermont House of Representatives and a longtime ally of Odanak, went outside to inform them that they could not enter. The situation subsequently escalated, and part of the incident was captured on video. A short video clip documenting the incident is available and can be shared upon request. Headrick was reportedly pushed and struck by one of the individuals while another person at the scene filmed the incident. A 911 call was made, and police took statements from witnesses before escorting the individuals off the property. One person was arrested for assault and subsequently released. Their next court appearance is scheduled for November 5.

A pattern of intimidation that has gone on for far too long

For the Abenaki Council of Odanak, what occurred Wednesday evening was not an isolated incident. Members of Odanak and their allies regularly face acts of intimidation and confrontations in Vermont involving individuals associated with groups that claim an Abenaki identity without being recognized by the Nation.

On the evening of the incident, signs bearing the words “Missisquoi Territory” were also placed along the road and on the property of Rock Point Commons. According to accounts



gathered following the incident, the atmosphere was hostile enough that some of those in attendance feared for their safety and the security of their property.

“What happened goes beyond a simple disagreement about identity or our history. Our members and allies must be able to gather and participate in activities in Vermont without being intimidated, threatened or assaulted. We have been denouncing these behaviours for years. Violence must never become a means of silencing those who defend the truth and the sovereignty of our Nation,” said Jacques T. Watso, Councillor with the Abenaki Council of Odanak.

For several years, the Abenaki Council of Odanak has denounced claims made by Vermont groups that identify themselves as Abenaki without being recognized by the Nation. The Council reiterates that determining belonging to an Indigenous Nation is the responsibility of Indigenous peoples themselves, not of groups or individuals who proclaim themselves to be representatives of that Nation.

The Council also wishes to express its deep gratitude to Representative Troy Headrick and to all allies of the Abenaki Nation, wherever they may be. Their unwavering support for the defence of the sovereignty, rights and integrity of the Abenaki Nation is essential and reflects the strength of the solidarity that has developed around this cause.

Intimidation, threats and violence will not change this reality. The Abenaki Council of Odanak will continue to defend the identity, history and sovereignty of the Nation while documenting acts of intimidation targeting its members and allies.

-30-

Source: Abenaki Council of Odanak

For information and interview requests:

Pascal Deslauriers

Media Relations

514-295-2103

p.deslauriers@seize03.ca