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Six Nations Elected Council Calls for Justice

OHSWEKEN (June 11, 2018) –

Six Nations Elected Council is watching closely the trial of Peter Khill that starts today in the Superior Court of Justice in Hamilton. Khill is charged with second degree murder of a young Six Nations man, 29-year-old father of two, Jon Styres. Jon is described by his family as a loving, loyal, good father – he was greatly loved by his friends and family and his tragic passing has had a significant impact on the Six Nations community.

“Indigenous people will not feel safe until there is a justice system in place that values Indigenous lives,” said Chief Ava Hill. “Each failure of the justice system – Colten Boushie, Tina Fontaine, Cindy Gladue – represents how 150 years of colonization continue to translate into racism, injustice and tragedy for Indigenous peoples.”

Peter Khill is expected to be tried before the Honourable Justice Glithero with a jury. There are long standing concerns that the jury system, in particular, is unfair to Indigenous people. The jury that acquitted Gerald Stanley of the murder of Colten Boushie was void of any visibly Indigenous people, in part because the defence prevented any Indigenous looking people from being included in the jury.

The Six Nations Elected Council has recently called for an overhaul of the justice system and a national strategy to address racism in Canada. Comments on social media since the killing of Jon Styres reveal the presence of racism locally.

“Peaceful co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples requires a justice process that is non-discriminatory and fair,” says Chief Hill. “Justice is necessary if there is to be any hope for reconciliation.”

The trial will be an emotionally challenging experience for victims of this trauma. Staff of the Justice Department’s Indigenous Victim Services will be on hand to provide assistance along with the Hamilton-based Victim-Witness Assistance Program.

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