



For Immediate Release: August 23, 2022

## Six Nations Statement on Lights Festival

On Saturday, August 20, 2022, an unsanctioned event took place on Six Nations without prior consultation with Elected Council, Six Nations Fire, or Six Nations Police. The event, which was a “Lights Festival” to launch fire-powered lanterns, generated concern among community members due to the volume of attendees and the potential fire hazard it presented. Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council sent a letter to event organizers on August 16 to inform them that the release of lanterns on the territory was not authorized.

Thousands of people descended on the territory on Saturday for this event, which resulted in substantial traffic congestion, road closures, trespassing, property damage, and risk to pedestrians who parked their cars along the side of the road. Six Nations Police were present to direct traffic and asked event organizers that they not light the lanterns due to concerns surrounding fire safety.

Some lanterns were lit by unknown individuals in violation of health and safety directives. Not only does this have an adverse effect on our environment, it presents a substantial fire risk as our territory is home to the largest strand of Carolinian Forest in the country.

“This unsanctioned event represents a callous disregard for the safety and wellbeing of the people of Six Nations,” said Elected Chief Mark Hill, who was present on Saturday to speak with event organizers to address community concerns. “It is unacceptable that outside organizations think they can exploit our sovereignty for their own benefit by hosting events on the territory that have little to no benefit to our community. Six Nations and its residents deserve respect from visitors to the territory, as well as from our own community members.

“I would also like to extend my sympathies to the family of the late Manuel Johnson, who passed last week and whose loved ones had difficulty travelling to his wake on Saturday due to the traffic from this event.”

Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council would like to thank Six Nations Police and Six Nations Fire & Emergency Services for their timely and coordinated response to this situation and for their efforts to keep everyone safe.

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