

Olympic Protesters Released without Charges after Blockade of Olympic Torch Relay on Trans Canada Hwy.

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Indigenous youth demonstrate that 2010 Olympics are opposed by grassroots First Nations people.

M'Chigeeng, Ontario—Today, a group of Indigenous youth and allies were arrested by OPP while setting up a blockade of the Olympic Torch Relay on the Trans Canada Hwy as it travelled from Sudbury to Sault Ste Marie. Algonquin, Anishnabe and Haudenosaunee youth united today to confront VANOC's 2010 Torch Relay, a symbol of colonial injustice. All who attended the blockade were arrested during the process of setting up an elaborate 'lockdown' blockade that was to include a climber scaling the bridge over the Spanish River to 'drop' an anti-Olympic banner. The activists were released without charges, and all the blockade gear was returned by police.

Mark Corbiere, a member of M'Chigeeng First Nation said that the point of the blockade was "to challenge the idea being rolled forward by VANOC that Canada has a respectful and progressive relationship with Indigenous people and their nations." Corbiere continued, "The truth is that Canada has a legacy of colonialism as brutal as any in history—of cultural genocide, and in fact, colonialism is ongoing in this country, and so is Canada's attempted genocide of Indigenous nations." He was arrested and released today without charges.

Anti-Olympic and solidarity activist Dan Kellar, who was also arrested today while covering the event for Canadian independent media, says that the reason charges were not laid is because VANOC is reeling from the attention that Olympic protesters have drawn to the Olympics' and Canada's shameful record of abusing First Nations Peoples and their cultures. "VANOC has had the Olympic spotlight shone on the lie that Canada and BC are engaged in meaningful partnerships with First Nations," said Kellar. "The truth is though, that despite the endorsement of the 'Four Host First Nations' corporation, the Provincial representative body, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs has gone on record as considering a formal protest of the Games," he said.

"Even Phil Fontaine, in 2008, while still head of the AFN, during the Beijing Torch Relay, said that the world should expect protests similar to those conducted by Tibetans and their allies against China's 2008 Olympics," says Mark Corbiere. "Fontaine said then, that people should be just as outraged at Canada's treatment of First Nations as China's treatment of Tibet—today he is a paid advisor for Olympic sponsor RBC, helping direct the whitewash of Canada's ongoing colonialism." Corbiere concluded, "From Tibet to Turtle Island colonialism is a crime."

ORNO contingencies conducted anti-colonial demonstrations against the Olympic Torch Relay in a dozen cities across the Province this month. The predominate theme of those protests is encapsulated by the chant which rang through the downtown streets of Kitchener and Toronto, with each of those events drawing in excess of 200 people, "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land."

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