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## **SYILX NATION'S ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY Commemorates the 1990 Oka Run for Peace**

**swiw's (Osoyoos), Syilx Territory, British Columbia:** With global political and social turmoil on the rise it has never been more important to have a united voice advocating for peace, justice and human rights.

On August 17 as part of the Okanagan Nation's Annual General Assembly (AGA) a run will take place from *chuchuwaya* (Hedley) to *swiw's*, BC, to commemorate the OKA Run for Peace. The original Run took place in the summer 1990 over six weeks, and saw more than 73 Okanagan Nation members run from *Syilx* to *Kanehsatà:ke* territory to show solidarity with the Mohawk resistance to developments on their sacred burial grounds during the Oka Crisis.

Chief Clarence Louie affirmed that "This Commemoration Run is meant to honor and recognize this time *Syilx* history where the *Syilx* Nation took a stand for peace and solidarity with the *Kahnawá:ke* during the Oka Crisis and whereby all Indian Nations continue to do so to protect their lands, peoples and resources". The same struggles that ignited the 1990 Oka Crisis persist within the Okanagan territory, as Chief Keith Crow states that "it is a disgrace that we have had to wait almost a year and a half, and still we have no resolve on our disturbed ancestral burial grounds".

These historical acts continue to resonate with the current need to face the challenges imposed on *Syilx* territory and our member communities and indigenous peoples across Canada. Though the Oka Crisis highlighted the struggles faced by indigenous communities in Canada we continue to demand for the right and responsibility to protect our sacred sites and territories. The nation will welcome Ellen Gabriel, a *Kanehsatà:ke* Mohawk Territory indigenous human rights activist and a key spokesperson during the Oka Crisis, to the event.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip (ONA Chairman) stated, "the ONA's 2017 Annual General Assembly provides *Syilx* people with the opportunity to gather as a Nation, to celebrate the many successes that have taken place for our people over the last year, and reflect on the challenges that we continue to face. With an ambitious political agenda from the Province of BC to fully embrace the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsement of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and support our ongoing opposition to the Site C dam project, Kinder Morgan pipeline proposal and BC/Petronas's Lelu Island LNG facility, the coming year will demand that we stand united to ensure that our collective Title and Rights are recognized and respected".

*The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) was formed in 1981 as the inaugural First Nations government in the Okanagan, which represents the 8 member communities of the Okanagan Nation.*

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