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## NAVAJO NATION CALLS UPON PRESIDENT OBAMA TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE TO END DAPL

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ-President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez issued a letter yesterday to President Barack Obama, asking him to intervene on behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) recently learned that a peaceful protest on Nov. 20, staged by residents from the Oceti Sakowin and Sacred Stone Camps, came to a violent end when demonstrators tried to remove road barricades.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department along with the State of North Dakota barricaded a highway that endangered residents by obstructing emergency services from accessing a critical highway.

During a peaceful demonstration that was held at night, the police sprayed demonstrators with three water cannons in subfreezing temperatures that were reported to have reached 22F.

It has been reported that a young woman was struck with a concussion grenade that exploded on her arm.

"The extent of military force and the violent repercussions suffered by residents and demonstrators is uncalled for and excessive, to say the least," said President Russell Begaye. "We are calling upon President Obama to take expedient action on this issue and permanently halt any further construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and in recognition of the tribe's dispossessions to the land and the importance of Lake Oahe to the Tribe."

The president is also asking the Morton County Sheriff's Department to consider the repercussions of their excessively forceful actions and the violence they are perpetuating.

OPVP has previously issued a letter in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and both President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez have visited the camps at Cannon Ball, N.D. They have also spoken with Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II about the Dakota Access Pipe-

line several times.

The Navajo Nation has tribal members that have traveled to the camps to support the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. As such, the Nation is consistently looking out for the well being of all who have traveled to Cannon Ball to support the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and supports non-violent means in facilitating any resolve.

"We don't believe a peaceful protest warranted the water cannons, rubber bullets or concussion grenades that were used against unarmed demonstrators," said President Begaye. "We support peaceful demonstrations."

Vice President Jonathan Nez said the Obama administration cannot sit back in light of recent violence inflicted upon Native Americans in North Dakota. He said President Obama must put an end to the Dakota Access Pipeline construction because the lives of Native American people hang in the balance.

"An overzealous military police force is utilizing chemical warfare against peaceful native protesters. Why is this legacy of oppression and violence continuing in this day and age?" he asked.

"The Morton County Sheriff's Department use of water cannons to spray protesters with mace laced water during sub-zero temperatures is not only unjust, but a reflection of the racial tensions boiling over throughout the United States," Vice President Nez said.

He added that Indian Health Services must be honest about the injuries they are treating and share this information with the Obama administration and the media. These types of injuries only occur on the battlefield during war or during violent criminal acts."

"People are going to die if no action is taken," Vice President Nez said. "It's imperative that we do something before the Trump administration takes office."

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# THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT  
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

November 22, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

**RE: Dakota Access Pipeline**

President Obama,

The Navajo Nation asks for your intervention to the recent incidents at the Oceti Sakowin and Sacred Stone Camps in North Dakota. There are many indigenous people and supporters who are unarmed and holding peaceful protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, but met with excessive force. It is very concerning to witness the use of water cannons and rubber bullets on many individuals, some of whom are tribal members of the Navajo Nation.

We ask your Office and the U.S. Department of Justice to stop this atrocity occurring at these Camps. Our democracy must protect the people's right to peacefully assemble.

Your Administration has consistently been a strong supporter to Native Americans, by protecting and honoring the rights of our tribal nations throughout the United States. We ask for you to continue this support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who seeks environmental justice, protection of their sacred sites, water, and to protect the First Amendments rights for all of us.

Respectfully,

**THE NAVAJO NATION**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell Begaye".

Russell Begaye, *President*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan M. Nez".

Jonathan M. Nez, *Vice President*