



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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Chief James W. Ransom  
Chief Monica M. Jacobs  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **St. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE HOLDS SPECIAL TRIBAL MEETING**

*Community Members, Tribal Officials Discuss Border Situation*

**AKWESASNE TERRITORY** – At a special tribal meeting held on Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, St. Regis Mohawk Tribal officials met with approximately 40 community members to discuss the situations of the closed border, the impacts on the community, the closed bridge and the progress towards resolving the issue through talks.

Tribal officials re-affirmed their support for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's (Northern portion of the reserve) in getting their concerns addressed, but have not taken a position on whether or not the Canadian Border Service guards should be armed. "We are looking to the residents of Cornwall Island and the membership under the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) to make that determination. They are the ones who are most directly affected," said Tribal Chief James Ransom. A recent internal survey showed that 57% of St. Regis tribal employees were OK with Canadian border guards being armed with 43% opposed the idea. Ransom also listed the actions being taken by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe to start talks with the Canadian government and what's being done to support the efforts of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.

"We strongly support a peaceful resolution of the situation," affirmed Tribal Chief Barbara Lazore, underscoring the importance of both sides having discussions. "It is important that peace be maintained and that a meaningful dialogue occurs to find solutions." The reluctance of the Canadian government to engage in talks to reach solutions and re-open the bridge is puzzling, but talks seem to be the most important step in finding common ground.

Tribal Chief Monica Jacobs asserted, "We will continue to work with and are committed to help MCA to look in to the issues of possible racial profiling or any mistreatment of any Mohawks crossing the border." Relations between Mohawk community members and border guards appear to be the crux of the issue that resulted in the bridge being closed.

The impact of the bridge closing was also discussed, especially its effects on employees getting to work, school children going to school, emergency services and on local businesses. Clearly, the bridge closing is having an economic impact not only in the Akwesasne Territory, but also on surrounding businesses and economies on both sides of the border. The tribe is coping with the blockade through boat taxis and making allowances for transportation difficulties experienced by employees.

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Tribal officials also mentioned the possibility of layoffs at the tribe. Given the fact that the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe is the largest employer in the North Country and is the economic engine for the region, this possible turn of events could have potentially disastrous effects on an already-depressed regional economy.

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The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the St. Regis Mohawk People.