

Mohawk Workers invited to the UN

By Jim Windle
KANATA VILLAGE

The Mohawk Workers of Kanata have been invited to the United Nations Headquarters in New York for a short but historical meeting with Mr. James Anaya, Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples as part of the 12th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which is being held from May 20 to 31st of this year.

The letter is confirmation of a request made earlier by the Mohawks. It was dated May 11, 2013 and arrived at Kanata Village Monday.

"Our mission is to seek redress for years of oppression including apartheid and genocide and the restoration of a Ka-nyen-geh-ha-kah homeland within our Haldimand Territory," the

initial letter to Anaya from the Mohawks stated. "At this time we expect to further raise concerns of gross violations of the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, apartheid and genocide and follow up on our preliminary submission made in 2012."

The Mohawks also want to address the crime of apartheid as defined by the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as inhumane acts of a character similar to other crimes against humanity "committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."

On November 30, 1973, the United Nations General

Assembly opened for signature and ratification the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. It defined the crime of apartheid as "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them."

The Mohawk Workers were very pleased to receive the invitation, however Bill Squire, spokesman for the Workers was already going as part of a delegation of some 714 Nations.

"Robert Rose of the Cherokee Nation already invited me to go, but it's good that the Special Rapporteur has invited us to a special audience with him," says Squire. "It will give us a chance to

discuss the issues of our people."

Squire and Ellis Hill will be going to represent the Mohawk Workers. Although they will only have about 20 minutes to speak, advance information and documentation has already been sent ahead.

It's not the first time the Mohawk Workers have attempted to seek justice through an international body.

In the early 1920's Chief Levi "Deskaheh" General and lawyer G. P. Decker went to England and throughout Europe seeking an ear from the newly established world court at The Hague, in Holland.

After initial success in bringing the case against the Crown of Britain and Canada, Canadian Indian Affairs Minister Duncan Campbell

Scott through Ottawa and the Foreign Affairs Minister of England at the time, Winston Churchill, pressured other member nations against allowing Deskaheh and Decker to be heard by the general assembly, despite having the backing and endorsements of at least four member nations.

Following the death of Deskaheh in 1924, the RCMP raided Six Nations in retaliation to the international embarrassment caused by Deskaheh and Decker and removed the traditional government of the traditional Chiefs Council and replaced it with a puppet regime which is still in existence today.

The Workers tried again in 1945, in San Francisco when they attempted to be included as a recognized Nation in the newly formed League of Nations, the precursor to the

United Nations.

Then too, political pressure from Canada and Great Britain prevented the Mohawk Nation from being accepted, despite the fact that they complied with every article of membership. Ironically, Canada was accepted as a member nation although it did not meet any of the requirements for admission into the League.

The news from New York was especially satisfying to Squire. He is intimately aware of the Workers fight for recognition. It was his grandfather, James Squire-Hill Sr., who led the delegation that went to San Francisco in 1945 with the Haldimand Deed and many other documents proving the Mohawk Workers case on behalf of all the people of Six Nations of the Grand River.