

# First Nations walking to Ottawa to declare independence from Canada

By Nahnda Garlow

**OTTAWA** – The Anishnabe Nation of the Ottawa River Watershed are walking nearly 300km to declare independence from the nation-state of Canada and will simultaneously declare 'tibenindizowin' (Independence) in a move to protect their territory.

According to a press release, the Anishnabe Nation of the Ottawa River Watershed are concerned that the territory has been subjected to "massive exploitation of Canadian governments and all corporations such as mining, logging, fishing and gaming commissions (SEPAQ)."

Starting June 15, walkers set out from La Verendrye Wildlife Reserve, "an old park that once provided a sanctuary for the animals, wildlife, flora and fauna, approximately the heartland of the Anishnabe lands."

On June 26th, the walkers will arrive in Ottawa on Victoria Island and make the declaration over their territory during a Declaration of Independence Day celebration.

Organizers said a symbolic Peace Flame signifying unity, will be carried throughout the 275km walk.

"The Anishnabe Nation of the Ottawa River



Members of the Anishnabe Nation are making a journey to Ottawa and will arrive on June 26th.

Watershed, people known as the stewards of the land, are claiming their rightful tibenindizowin — independence and title — to protect Mother Earth from all the harm that has been inflicted to the ecosystem and all its beings throughout the years by disrespectful governments and corporations, which has also directly threatened the distinctive culture of the Anishnabe Nation. This will restore the historical nation-to-nation Two Row Wampum Treaty," reads the statement sent to the *Two Row Times* earlier this week.

The walkers are making the long journey on foot as they apprehend the responsibility they

have been given as defenders of the land. "Man-made environmental disasters such as climate

change, pollution, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, natural resource depletion, over-fishing,

among many others, have destroyed and continue to destroy our planet and all its living creatures on

a daily basis. The tipping point has already passed and it foreshadows a darker and painful future for all humankind," they said.

The group also issued a call to action, "We invite other walkers from all four directions to walk with us, carrying flames from their territories, to be merged on June 26, in Ottawa, into a single flame to begin a new era of peace, love, understanding and respect for each other and for Mother Earth."

For more information or to join the walk contact the Traditional Anishnabe Government, Provisional Governing Council via email at Shannon.Chief@anorw.org.