

## **Clyde River Inuit granted leave to appeal seismic blasting case at Supreme Court**

**10 March 2016 (OTTAWA)** — The Supreme Court of Canada today granted the Inuit community of Clyde River leave to appeal at the country's highest court, where they will challenge the controversial approval of a five-year seismic blasting project in waters near the Arctic hamlet.

Jerry Natanine, former mayor of Clyde River and one of the applicants in the case, said, "We are so grateful that the Supreme Court agreed to hear our case. Everything is on the line for us here — if the seismic blasting goes ahead, our entire way of life could be forever compromised. Our community did not consent to this. Inuit traditional knowledge and modern scientific data both teach us that seismic blasting is harmful for marine mammals. We're hopeful that the Court will see that this is about our basic rights to eat, to feed our children, and to live our lives the way we always have."

The approval of seismic blasting against the will of Baffin Island Inuit is a clear violation of their rights under international law as set out by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Trudeau government has agreed to respect and uphold the Declaration, but has yet to comment on Clyde River's legal battle or offer support for the community.

This legal avenue is the latest step for the Clyde River Hamlet, Hunters and Trappers Organization, and former Mayor, whose 2014 application for a Judicial Review [was dismissed by the Federal Court of Appeal](#). The application for a Judicial Review was filed in response to the National Energy Board (NEB) decision to allow for five years of seismic blasting in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. Clyde River has argued that seismic blasting is a known and sometimes fatal threat to marine mammals and further impacts Inuit hunting, their way of life, and their right to eat. Canada's highest Court will now decide whether the NEB erred in granting the seismic licence.

"At stake in this case is not only the health of the Arctic animals and the Arctic ecosystem, but also the food security and centuries-old way of life for an entire people," said Nader Hasan, Clyde River's counsel. "This case will also serve as an important precedent in all future Aboriginal Rights and duty-to-consult cases. So it's important that we help the Supreme Court to get it right."

Clyde River's struggle to protect their land, water, and livelihood from seismic impacts has won the attention of more than 300,000 people including high profile supporters like Emma Thompson, Naomi Klein and Lucy Lawless. Nunavut MP and federal Oceans minister Hunter Tootoo (Liberal) often referenced Clyde River's legal fight during the election campaign, and just

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<sup>1</sup> The Clyde River Solidarity Network includes Amnesty International Canada, Council of Canadians, Greenpeace Canada, Idle No More, and Mining Injustice Solidarity Network.

this week, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May added her voice to the cause, saying: “The issues here are so fundamental: the absolute right of Inuit people to eat Inuit food, the honour of the Crown, and a broken regulatory system.”

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