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# Six Nations and Caledonia residents clash over land claim dispute

By **Morganne Campbell** • Global News

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WATCH: Non-Indigenous counter-protesters disrupted a march by members of the Six Nations First Nation, as a heated land rights dispute over a housing development in Caledonia, Ont. continues to escalate. – Oct 25, 2020



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A standoff between some residents in **Caledonia** and members of **Six Nations** of the **Grand River** ensued Sunday after a dispute over land slated for a housing development between Caledonia and the territory about 100 kilometres west of Toronto.

“I’m tired of this – I’ve been through this for 80 years!” yelled one unidentified elder from Six Nations.

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**“We have to fight all of the time for our rights and this is our land. Nobody should be telling us what to do and how to live.”**

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The Haudenosaunee people have been demonstrating on the land since July, arguing the housing development is on unceded Indigenous land.

On Sunday, more than 100 supporters marched up to police barricades chanting “land back,” while some Caledonia residents looked on.

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For a short while, both sides were yelling obscenities at one another.

"So for these people here to come out and say, 'You know that we stand with you and we support you and we're willing to get behind this,' it's an amazing thing to see," said Six Nations spokesperson Skyler Williams, who pointed out that several people from Caledonia and neighbouring Hamilton joined their efforts.

But some Caledonia residents pushed back.

**Morganne Campbell**  
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Members of Six Nations and supporters have gathered at the road block in Caledonia. There's an apparent standoff not with just police but local residents who appear to be denouncing the blockade. [@globalnewsto](#)

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"We need to keep cool heads but we can't be intimidated either," said Andrew Bradbury, who lives just outside of Caledonia. "This is our town and it can be everyone's town if we can sit down and negotiate."

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**“They deserve to have some kind of negotiations, not to be ignored.”**

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Six Nations has been pushing for a meeting with provincial leaders and federal leaders to discuss the land claim dispute. Over the past 48 hours, they've said there has been several attempts to "break bread" with politicians, but so far no meetings have been planned.

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“The feds have been saying for five years now that they’re interested in nation-to-nation relationships and this is something we need to be pushing forward all of the time,” added Williams.

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According to the minister for crown-Indigenous relations, there have been attempts made to meet with community leaders.

“Canada deeply values its relationship with Six Nations and is committed to continuing to work collaboratively to address Six Nations’ historical claims and land right issues,” Carolyn Bennett wrote in an email to Global News.

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“There has been a consistent effort by Canada, Ontario and Six Nations to address Six Nations’ claims through dialogue and we have put in place flexible processes to allow for the exploration of new ways to achieve this goal. We are actively working with the community and look forward to meeting at the earliest opportunity.”

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Former Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day says this is an example of a number of broken promises and commitments from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples dating back to the 1990s. The Crown-appointed body was tasked with examining the relationships between governments and Indigenous Peoples.

“There is going to continue to be outstanding issues that need to be spoken through the perspective of lands rights and not so much those that have been bound by the Indian Act. There’s a very important issue here at hand and if

there's one thing to be said about the previous government, the Liberal government, they had an accord in place that could deal with these types of issues. It doesn't seem like the current Conservative government has a plan," Day said.

## **"It really is indicative of outstanding issues in this country."**

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Day points to the fisheries dispute on the East Coast and the Wet'suwet'en pipeline controversy in the West as two examples.

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