

Racism, benefits agreement focus of Innu protest at Muskrat Falls



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Innu protesters blocked access to the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric site Thursday. (CBC)

Innu protesters were at the gates to Muskrat Falls again Friday morning, stopping workers from getting to the hydroelectric-project site.

In a further development, Nalcor CEO Ed Martin will meet with Innu Nation Grand Chief Anastasia Qupee next week to discuss racism at the construction site.

- **[Muskrat Falls contract worker fired after Innu worker kicked in the head](#)**

Tension ramped up after the Innu Nation said Wednesday an Innu worker at Nalcor's Muskrat was kicked in the head by a worker employed by an outside contractor. Nalcor said

Fifteen to 20 protesters blocked road access to the site Thursday, during a quiet protest.

Simeon Tshakapesh, deputy grand chief of the Innu Nation said the protests continued through the night and Friday morning.

"Racism has to be addressed and the [Impacts and Benefits Agreement] has to be revisited and also the racial profiling has to stop," Tshakapesh said.

"The elders have spoken loud and clear, and the community members of the Innu Nation have spoken. They said, 'Enough is enough,' ... They want to end the racism and how aboriginal people are being treated, especially the Innu people at the work site."

Not the way to get there

In the meantime, Nalcor vice-president Gilbert Bennett said the protest is not helping resolve racism.

"This protest action is not helping resolve those issues, it's not helping to reconcile the issues among workers, ensuring that we have an inclusive workplace. This is not the way to get there. I think there's a better way to resolve those types of issues," Bennett said.

"Our ultimate objective is to have an inclusive workplace, to make sure everybody on site is respected. But we have to take action to do that. That's not something that we can just say we'll will that to happen automatically. It take efforts on both sides in order to achieve that goal," he said.

Bennett said there are workers on site, but the health and safety of the workers is Nalcor's primary concern.

"We also had hundreds of workers last night who were delayed in returning to their camp after the days' work. They had medicine and prescription drugs in their camp they were unable to get to those," he said.

Bennett said the situation Friday morning was being managed, with Nalcor identifying who was getting to work and who wasn't.

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