

The Indigenous Environment Network Responds to Forced Evacuation of DAPL Resistance Camps

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CANNON BALL, N.D.-- At 2 pm CT on February 22, 2017, water protectors at the Oceti Sakowin camp were evicted by the Army Corps of Engineers. Despite efforts from camp leaders requesting more time to clean up the camp, the Army Corp remained firm with its plans to vacate the camp. The Army Corp claims jurisdiction of the land that the camp is located on even though the land is within the unceded Fort Laramie Treaty land and territories.

Individuals who voluntarily left camp prior to 2 o'clock had the choice to take a bus to be transported to an evacuation center, or relocate to other campsites outside of the eviction zone. Water protectors remaining in the camp now face risk of arrest.

There are three other campsites in the area for water protectors to relocate to: Sacred Stone, Cheyenne River, and 7th Generation camps.

Various law enforcement jurisdictions were on site including Morton County Sheriff's, North Dakota State Highway Patrol and the North Dakota National Guard and National Park Service Rangers. The Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement established a traffic checkpoint and barricade on Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation land, on Highway 1806, to the south of the Cannonball River bridge.

The following is a statement by Tom Goldtooth, the Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network:

"We are appalled by today's forced evacuations of indigenous people at the Camp at Standing Rock, they are a violent and unnecessary infringement on the constitutional right of water protectors to peacefully protest and exercise their freedom of speech. It hinders the camp cleanup process and creates confusion and chaos that puts the Missouri River at risk of pollution from construction and camping debris.

"Today's expulsion is a continuation of a centuries old practice, where the U.S. Government forcefully removes Indigenous people from our lands and territories. We urge supporters of the water protectors to continue to resist this travesty by organizing mass mobilizations, distributed actions, speaking out against the violations of the Treaty rights of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation, and continuing to source up the capacity for litigation and grassroots organizing against the Dakota Access pipeline.

"Our hearts are not defeated. The closing of the camp is not the end of a movement or fight, it is a new beginning. They cannot extinguish the fire that Standing Rock started. It burns within each of us. We will rise, we will resist, and we will thrive. We are sending loving thoughts to the water protectors along the banks of the Cannonball River, today. May everyone be as safe as can be. [#noDAPL](https://twitter.com/indigenousenvironmentalnetwork)"