

# RALLY TO SUPPORT OF ROBERT LOVELACE AND THE KI 6

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2008

**Toronto-** Today a broad network of student, religious, social justice, human rights, union, environmental and indigenous groups will be calling on Premier Dalton McGuinty to halt mineral exploration in the lands of two Aboriginal communities in Ontario so that the imprisonment of seven Aboriginal leaders can be brought to an end.

The groups will be holding a rally on April 9, 2008 at 6:00 pm at the Ryerson Students Centre, 55 Gould Avenue in support of Robert Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and the six leaders from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) who are in prison for peacefully opposing drilling projects on their traditional territories in Ontario.

Signifying the importance of the issue to Aboriginal rights and sovereignty, both National Chief Phil Fontaine and former National Chief Ovide Mercredi of the Assembly of First Nations are addressing the rally.

"This is a chance for Canadians from every walk of life to say no to this gross violation of Aboriginal rights, to demand that these leaders be freed, and that no further mining exploration be allowed on indigenous land. The communities have said NO and we support their right to do that," said Judy Rebick, CAW Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and host of the rally.

Robert Lovelace, university professor and retired chief of the Ardoch Algonquins, attempted to stop uranium prospectors from surveying and drilling on traditional lands in the Ottawa River Watershed. The KI Six were jailed for failing to obey a court order that would give Toronto-area mineral exploration company Platinex Inc. drilling rights in the community's traditional territory about 550 kilometers north of Thunder Bay in the Boreal Forest. Each was jailed for six months for contempt of court. In both cases, peaceful opposition to drilling projects landed the leaders in jail.

"I'm prepared to go to jail for my belief in the land." said KI Chief Donny Morris before his hearing on contempt of court charges. Chief Donny Morris will address the rally by phone from his jail.

The jailing of these leaders is causing terrible suffering and fear in their communities. KI is a remote northern community that has just lost the majority of its leadership and the Ardoch community has also been sentenced to draconian fines.

"The message delivered through this court decision is one of domination and oppression," said Chief Paula Sherman of the Ardoch decision.

"The problem here is the antiquated 'free entry' system that allows mining and exploration without consultation with affected First Nations communities or consideration of other values such as ecological values, trapping, hunting, clean water or even consideration of climate change impacts," said Joan Kuyek, National Coordinator of MiningWatch Canada. "These conflicts could have been avoided, if the McGuinty government had listened to Aboriginal people and removed these lands from mining."

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## Sponsors

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