



December 30, 2023

Statement for Immediate Release

Statement Of Chairwoman Janet Alkire Re: 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre Items

Mitakuyapi,

On December 15, 1890, a great tragedy occurred in the early morning along the Grand River on the Standing Rock Reservation. On this day, our beloved Grandfather, Tatanka Iyotaka, Sitting Bull, was killed because of the love he had for his people and his strong commitment to our Lakota spiritual lifestyle. On December 29th and everyday, we remember our relatives who stood strong for the survival of our way of life. Our children need to know what happened.

We remember our Grandfather Tatanka Iyotaka and the Hunkpapa who gave their lives to protect our leader. We acknowledge today that the United States has still never admitted responsibility for his death and never apologized to the Hunkpapa People. On this tragic day, many of our Hunkpapa relatives fled from this murder in fear for their lives. Following the death of our Grandfather Tatanka Iyotaka and his society leaders, they immediately set off traveling South to the Cheyenne River agency.

Our Hunkpapa people went to their relatives of Spotted Elk's band seeking protection. Spotted Elk's band along with his Hunkpapa relatives, then traveled South to seek advice and protection from Red Cloud and the Oglala on the Pine Ridge agency. It was relatives from Sitting Bull's and Spotted Elk's bands who were massacred at Wounded Knee on December 29th, 1890.

Today, I understand the Barre Museum returned Wounded Knee artifacts to the Oglala Sioux Tribe. For the record, descendants from Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were not included in the determination of disposition of these cultural items. The massacre at Wounded Knee was the direct result of the assassination of our Grandfather Tatanka Iyotaka and the Hunkpapa descendants of the massacre must have their voice heard as well. As Chairwoman, I make this request to the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

As Chairwoman, I ask the Oglala Sioux Tribe to stop any decision to burn these returned artifacts until the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, the Wounded Knee descendants, the Hunkpapa descendants, and relatives meet in unity to discuss the disposition of the Barre Museum Wounded Knee artifacts.

As Chairwoman, I join Chairman Ryman LeBeau of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to call for a meeting to discuss with all descendants the final disposition of the recovered items. I support the December 28th statement of Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman, Ryman LeBeau, and our Hunkpapa descendants to meet prior to further decisions on these artifacts.

Mitakuye Oyasin,

Janet Alkire, Chairwoman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe