



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2016

Statement by the CRST Chairman Regarding Morton County Sheriff's Department press conference on 21 November 2016

RE: *Second hand information and misleading allegations*

On 21 November 2016 the Sheriff of Morton County had a press release that made allegations of misconduct and attempted to justify the use of excessive force against peaceful water protectors. A majority of the statements made by the individuals are simply not true. You cannot imagine the disappointment I have for sworn law enforcement officials who demonstrate qualities that undermine the trust we place in those selected to protect the innocent.

I was present during the attack on peaceful protectors which occurred on the evening of 20 November 2016. At no time did I witness any protectors make an attempt to cross the police defensive line.

Explosions and munitions being fired at the water protectors created the first sparks and fires I personally witnessed. Objects were launched that produced large amounts of sparks and balls of fire as they detonated. These created fires all along the banks of the creek and around the bridge. I did see protectors rushing to put out fires as quickly as possible all while being fired upon by officers from across the barriers.

Not once did I see any kind of "jerry" rigged explosive devices or attempts to cross the police defensive line. The only explosions I witnessed was the explosions from the indiscriminate discharge of concussion, chemical and "less-lethal" weapons on peaceful people. I did see brave people attempting to address the officers and asking them not to shoot at them any longer. Their answer was to get doused with water in below freezing temperatures and shot by officers wielding weapons.

The individual who did not identify himself during the press conference very arrogantly commented about the abusive use of water as "effective" and the willingness to continue the onslaught. I condemn this type of action and attitude. I was there that night and I encourage the Sheriff of Morton County to be present at these conflicts before he tells people what he heard from someone else. All of these allegations were said without offering any evidence in support.