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SCO Day of Unity Plans to be Paused until Further Negotiations

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — Jerry Daniels, Grand Chief of the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) has called for a pause in the SCO's plans for the March 20 "Day of Unity" blockades to be held across Manitoba. Grand Chief Daniels calls the pause "an olive branch and a show of good faith."

"While we continue to disagree with the actions of government that take important resources away from our people without appropriate compensation, we want to focus on *solutions*," said Grand Chief Daniels. "We will pause our actions pending negotiations, as an effort to accommodate authentic and sincere discussions. We also want to show the people of Manitoba that we look forward to making space for dialogue, awareness, and understanding." Daniels added, "It is long past time to end the blockade which is seldom talked about—the 150-year blockade that has been forced upon Indigenous economies."

In 2019, Southern Chiefs' Organization organized a series of seven two-hour blockades—called the "Unity Dance" series—on major arteries around the province, including Portage Avenue and Main Street in Winnipeg. These actions were taken to bring recognition of the issues Indigenous peoples face, and to spread awareness of every citizen's Treaty responsibility to share the land.

The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations of Manitoba that came together in 1999 to establish an independent political forum to protect, preserve, promote, and enhance First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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