

The Chronicle-Journal

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTHWEST

Sandy Lake strikes back; Tribunal takes turn on second day

By Heather Peden | The Chronicle-Journal
Aug 31, 2017 Updated Aug 31, 2017



Angele Kamalatisit, left, is the complainant against Sandy Lake First Nation in a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal this week. Ringo Fiddler, right, is Kamalatisit's common-law partner.

Sandy Lake First Nation denied on Wednesday that the chief and council infringed on Angele Kamalatisit's human rights when they asked her to leave their community in 2012.

The statement was made by lawyers for Sandy Lake during day two of a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal being held this week at the Victoria Inn.

Kamalatisit filed her complaint with the tribunal claiming she and her son were unfairly evicted from the Sandy Lake five years ago, a community in which she had lived for 10 years with her common-law partner, band member Ringo Fiddler.

The tribunal began Tuesday with testimony from Kamalatisit and continued Wednesday, hearing testimony from witnesses Fiddler and band member Thomas Dixon.

After the mid-day break Wednesday, Asha James, lawyer with Falconers LLP, made the opening statement on behalf of her client Sandy Lake First Nation.

"Sandy Lake First Nation denies that its decision to remove Miss Kamalatisit from the community was in any way based on the complainant's marital status, race or place of origin," said James.

The statement went on to claim that, "Miss Kamalatisit (was removed) from the community for her safety and concerns over her social media posting."

Kamalatisit, who is from Fort Albany First Nation, said on Tuesday that she stayed out of politics in Sandy Lake because she was not a band member and, therefore, it was not her place to comment. But Kamalatisit and Fiddler claim she was targeted because of Fiddler's opposition to the chief and council.

Nora J. Meekis, a Sandy Lake band member, was the first witness for the respondent on Wednesday. Meekis had engaged in a Facebook conversation that was alleged to be the catalyst for why Kamalatisit was asked to leave the community.

“She was putting our leadership down,” said Meekis during her testimony.

Sandy Lake First Nation Chief Bart Meekis and band member Zack Kakegamic are also scheduled to give testimony at the tribunal which is open to the public and may run until