

Statement by John Perkins

On May 23, 2019, I was falsely accused by a multinational gold mining corporation of creating a disturbance at a public meeting in Sherbrook, Nova Scotia. I understand that these false accusations were made in a 911 call to the local RCMP. The RCMP responded and immediately came to the Fire Hall where the meeting was taking place. Without any effort to investigate what had happened, the RCMP officer ordered me to leave. When I didn't leave, the officer grabbed me and forcibly pushed me out of the meeting room and dragged me to the floor and handcuffed me with my hands behind my back, injuring me in the process. He took me to his police cruiser and brought me to the police station where I remained in lock up for two hours. I was released without charges.

All of this was captured by video which were widely circulated and viewed at the time.

The arrest happened so fast and was so unexpected, I didn't know what to do. I felt humiliated, powerless and scared. The experience has affected me greatly.

Now I am angry. I had not created any disturbance at the meeting. There had been no disturbance at all. Now I am worried about the chilling effect my treatment by Atlantic Gold and the RCMP will have on other citizens who participate in public meetings or public debate, especially those who seek to protect the environment. Already I have had one friend say that he has decided not to attend any more meetings like this.

The only reason I can think of for the corporation to falsely accuse me of causing a disturbance is that they did not like the questions I had asked at an earlier meeting that afternoon. They called the RCMP to silence me—to prevent me from asking any critical questions that would be heard by fellow Nova Scotians attending the meeting.

This morning, I filed a lawsuit in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court against the RCMP officer who arrested me, Atlantic Gold, and individuals within Atlantic Gold who were directly involved in the incident. I feel strongly that it is my duty to hold them accountable for the injuries and harm they have done to me and to do what I can to stop this from happening again.

I have done this because I do not want people to think that corporations are legally permitted to make false accusations against members of the public in order to have them arrested and removed from public meetings.

I have done this because I do not want people to think that the RCMP can act on such false accusations and remove people from public meetings without any investigation whatsoever.

And, I have done this because I do not want people to think that corporations can then repeat such false accusations to the media and disparage people's reputations.

I have not made this decision lightly. Court cases can be long and arduous. However, I am overwhelmed by the support of my family, friends, and the strangers who have reached out to me and who are as outraged as I am by the events that took place on May 23.

I am thankful to my fellow members of SuNNS who have helped to organize [a GoFundMe campaign](#) to assist with the costs of the lawsuit.

I am thankful to East Coast Environmental Law for the legal guidance and support they have given me.

I am thankful to the St. Mary's River Association, The Sierra Club, and the Ecology Action Centre for their continuing interest and support.

And, finally, I am thankful to my Mi'kmaw friends and land and water protectors who have vowed to stand beside me in this fight.

Thank you.