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Copper River Natives Say Law System Discriminates

The Copper River Natives charged this week that the judicial and law enforcement systems in their area unfairly discriminate against them in favor of Cau-

casians.

In a statement of position mailed to the Tundra Times, the association wrote, "We cannot and will not take this sitting

down anymore. We demand equality and justice for our people."

After citing about 10 cases where they felt natives had been

treated unfairly, the group said, "My friends, white and non-white alike, the time is way overdue to correct the unwritten policy of our judicial and law enforcement

"Why are stronger measures and fines imposed on the Natives," they asked. "Why are whites not

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Copper River Natives . .

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prosecuted to the same degree as the Natives."

We are dubbed as second class citizens by the White society all because we are brown, but we are a proud people."

"It is no doubt that this letter will inflame a lot of people, but that is what it is meant to do," the natives wrote.

Of the total estimated population of 2400 in the 16.5 million acre region, about 500 are natives.

The natives, many of whom are Indians, contend that it is the white society which controls the social and economic conditions in which they live.

Centered around Glenallen, Copper Center, and Gulkana, the association cited the following examples in their statement:

—In 1965, a Copper River Indian was shot and killed by a preacher who was found not guilty by the Glennallen Magistrate.

—An Eskimo living in Glennallen was killed by a pickup driven by a Caucasian, who, it was rumored, had been drinking. The man was not cited and no hearing was held.

—In March a native was hit and killed by a freight truck. The truckdriver, a Caucasian, was not

cited.

—"A young amiable Native of Tanacross was shot and killed by two City Police Officers in Anchorage. The Police Officers reported they shot in self defense."

—A Native of Copper Center was arrested in Anchorage on a drunk charge. "Upon entering the jail, Andrew was reported by the escorting officer to have fallen and injured his head seriously. How does a drunk person seriously injure themselves in a cell that is padded to protect the physical being of a highly intoxicated person," they asked.

A nine-year-old Gulkana boy was hit by a school bus and the driver was not cited and no hearing held to this date.

A nine-year-old boy was killed this year by a car driven by a white. No hearing has been held or scheduled.

The statement lists several other cases including a couple where Indians were derogatorily referred to as "drunks."

Furthermore, the people were urged in the paper to withdraw their support from the churches until they start "crying and hollering about these wrongs and bad situations being done in public."