Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson has urged members of the Kickapoo Tribal Council to take action to resolve factional issues which have paralyzed the tribal government and interfered with the funding of needed tribal programs.

Headquarters for the 900-member tribe are at Horton, Kansas.

In a letter sent to each of the tribal council members, Commissioner Thompson expressed concern "about the unfortunate situation of the Kickapoo Tribe."

Noting that the Council had allowed the contract for the Indian Action Team to expire and that other programs were suffering, the Commissioner said: "I find it very difficult to believe the members of the tribal council are willing to allow their personal animosities to destroy these beneficial programs, the attendant employment of the Kickapoo people and the good name of the Kickapoo tribe."

The Indian Action Team program provided jobs for more than 30 tribal members.

Opposing factions on the tribal council have refused to meet together and have thus prevented, by lack of quorum, essential council actions.

Thompson emphasized in his letter that, the tribal council had the authority and capability to resolve its problems without intervention from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "We feel that it would be a serious breach of our commitment to Indian self-determination and an erosion of tribal sovereignty if we interceded in a situation which is totally within the tribal council's ability and authority to handle."

Thompson said that the council has a moral responsibility, as well as a constitutional duty, "To put aside personal differences and to act as a body on these critical tribal business matters."

Thompson's letter outlined certain steps to be taken by the Kickapoo Tribal Council and the Kickapoo people to restore viable tribal government to the Kickapoos. He offered the assistance of BIA staff to help achieve this goal.