

Officials Warn Indian Band Casino Could Close If Violence Continues

San Jacinto, California – The National Indian Gaming Commission has warned a Riverside County Indian band that its casino could be closed in a „worst-case scenario“ if violence continues, it was reported Sunday.

„Closure of the facility might be necessary“ if violent incidents continue near the Soboba Casino, Gaming Commission Chairman Phil Hogen told the Riverside Press-Enterprise.

But the local fire department has resumed responding to service calls on the reservation southeast of Riverside after law enforcement and fire officials noted that the situation appears to be calming down, and acts of violence have stopped.

The Soboba band of Luiseno Indians has been embroiled in a jurisdictional falling-out with the local law enforcement agency, the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department, after the tribe cut payments for law enforcement on the reservation, home to a thriving casino, near San Jacinto.

Since then, sheriff’s deputies said they were ambushed twice in a week on the reservation, which occupies a hilly and rural section of land. Three tribal members were killed in the two incidents, prompting a warning from the sheriff’s union earlier this month that the reservation casino might be unsafe.

The local fire department stopped responding on the reservation after a series of violent car chases, said CalFire/Riverside County Capt. Fernando Herrera.

„Things have changed, and there have been no incidents for

weeks," Herrera told the Press-Enterprise Friday.