



Press release
For immediate distribution

Quebec does not intend to adopt Joyce's Principle: The government still denies the existence of systemic racism

Kahnawake, February 22, 2021 - Although the Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs, Ian Lafrenière, recognizes that there is still a long way to go before achieving full fairness and equity for Indigenous people, he remains closed to the idea of adopting Joyce's Principle.

This principle developed by the Council of the Atikamekw Nation wants to ensure that all Indigenous have the guarantee to live in a society without discrimination. It is absurd to see that in 2021, it is still such a problematic demand.

The *Charter of human rights and freedoms* proclaims that “every human being possesses intrinsic rights and freedoms designed to ensure his protection and development”. However, Indigenous women feel neither protected nor fulfilled with the inequity they experience daily.

If according to the Charter, "every human being whose life is in danger has the right to help", are we to understand that Joyce Echaquan was not considered a human being? Isn't that what the nurses' hateful comments and their decision to refrain from saving her life suggest?

Therefore, the government's perpetual refusal to recognize Joyce's Principle on the pretext that it would be tantamount to recognizing the existence of systemic racism is outrageous.

Minister Lafrenière still supports the cause saying that even if it is not recognized, a way must be found to improve the fate of Indigenous people. We want to repeat that the right thing to do is to adopt Joyce's Principle.

It makes no sense for the Government of Canada to give \$2 million to the Atikamekw Nation of Manawan in order to promote the development of work and the realization of the Joyce Principle, and for Quebec to ultimately put the brakes on the said principle.

How many other tragic events must we go through before our voice is finally heard at its true value? What other degrading events must we go through for you to finally recognize the presence of systemic racism? How many more times do you have to repeat the same things for it to change?

We are tired of small solutions that only serve to calm the events of the moment, we need radical and significant changes that will be perpetuated through time and generations. "Systemic racism kills," says Viviane Michel, President of Quebec Native Women.

We can never say it enough: Justice for Joyce!

-30-

Source :

Doreen Petiquay Barthold - Communication Officer
(514) 757-1508

communication@faq-qnw.org