



**FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.**  
**QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.**

**Press release**  
**For immediate distribution**

**Justice for Joyce: Coroner's public hearings begin**

**Kahnawake, May 13th 2021** —The coroner's office begins today, at the Trois-Rivières courthouse, the public hearings on the tragic death of Joyce Echaquan. This mother of seven children, originally from the Atikamekw community of Manawan, died tragically last September 28 at the Lanaudière Regional Hospital.

Eight months after Joyce's death, the hearings that are beginning are presided over by Me Géhane Kamel, who is also the coroner responsible for a committee on mortality in Indigenous and Inuit communities. It is important to mention that the coroner's mandate is not to pronounce on the civil or criminal responsibility of anyone, but rather to determine the causes and circumstances of the death. If necessary, the coroner must make recommendations in order to avoid other similar deaths. Moreover, in an exceptional manner, interpreters will ensure the translation in Atikamekw of the hearings that are held in French.

Among the many witnesses expected between May 13 and June 2, Carol Dubé, Joyce's spouse, was the first to testify in court. He did not forget to mention that his deceased spouse had a certain amount of apprehension every time she had to go to the hospital. Her medical condition meant that she had to go once a month despite the anxiety it caused her. Mr. Dubé showed great strength in describing the tragic events that led to his wife's death. He bears the resilience of his wife, who filmed herself to publicize the injustices that First Nations people receive in the health care system. Thanks to her, a wave of shock and indignation has caused people around the world to react. Many voices joined the cause to denounce the systemic racism that exists towards Indigenous people and the impact on the health care they receive, unfortunately, on a daily basis.

It goes without saying that everyone wants this investigation to not only shed light on what happened to Joyce, but also to expose the systemic issues.

Viviane Michel, President of Quebec Native Women, was at the hearing this morning to support the family. It will be possible to listen to the testimony of Viviane Michel and Dr. Browne on May 28 and the final representations on June 2. Browne on May 28 and the final submissions on June 2. This will support our organization's position.

Source:

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