



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.



APNQL
ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS
QUEBEC-LABRADOR

**Press release
For immediate diffusion**

PETITION PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT INVITED TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF SYSTEMIC RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN QUEBEC

Kahnawake, March 16, 2023 - Quebec Native Women (QNW) today tabled a petition in the Blue Room of the Quebec National Assembly calling on Premier Legault's government to recognize systemic racism and discrimination in Quebec and to adopt Joyce's Principle.

The petition, submitted by Québec solidaire member and co-spokesperson Manon Massé, calls on the Quebec government, through the recognition of systemic racism and discrimination and the adoption of Joyce's Principle, to guarantee all Indigenous People, through concrete action, the right to equitable access, without discrimination, to all health and social services, as well as the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

It was reiterated that systemic racism and discrimination are at the root of the issues that Indigenous women and girls face on a daily basis. The tragic death of Joyce Echaquan is an extreme example of this, as well as the cases of the Val D'or women, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, forced sterilizations, etc.

Indigenous women are omnipresent in all spheres of society and are at the heart of the preservation and transmission of our peoples' ancestral knowledge. It is imperative that major changes take place to ensure their safety, integrity, and well-being everywhere in Quebec.

"It is important to recognize a fact, an issue, a reality in order to improve conditions in society. The filing of this petition, initiated by Quebec Native Women, indicates to the government to take a step forward if it really wants to work in reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples", said Sipi Flamand, Chief of the Manawan Atikamekw Council.

The petition was launched on November 30th and its official announcement was the subject of a rally in front of the National Assembly, organized by QNW, in partnership with the Manawan Atikamekw Council and Joyce's Principle Office. The petition collected nearly 4,000 signatures.

A press conference was held in the lobby of the National Assembly during which Marjolaine Étienne, President of Quebec Native Women, Sipi Flamand, Chief of the Manawan Atikamekw Council and Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) spoke.

"The tabling of our petition in the National Assembly was a highly anticipated moment, as we have had proof that it has truly mobilized the Quebec population. Our allies are numerous and the number of signatures

collected has exceeded our expectations. The support of the people of Quebec is being felt, it is now up to Premier Legault to listen to us and become an ally of Indigenous women and girls," declared Marjolaine Étienne, President of Quebec Native Women.

"TOGETHER, AGAINST SYSTEMIC RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION"

The issue of systemic racism and discrimination in Quebec was also discussed by QNW, in partnership with the Manawan Atikamekw Council and the Joyce's Principle Office, at the meeting held with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on March 2nd. The latter committed to carefully examining the issues raised by QNW and its collaborators and reiterated his support for Indigenous women and girls.

"Systemic racism, and systemic discrimination have been present in the lives of Indigenous peoples, and particularly Indigenous women for far too long. The current government has a unique opportunity to walk the talk. If it wants to be consistent with its new campaign to raise awareness on Indigenous issues, the Quebec government can be part of the solution. I urge the provincial government to take action now, in collaboration with First Nations people across our region, with the demonstrated support of Quebec civil society through this petition. How many action plans will it take to begin making changes on this life-threatening issue of systemic racism against Indigenous people? How many more lives will be taken by the system before we begin to see these changes as required?" questioned Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador.

About QNW

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women is a non-profit organization that represents First Nations women in Quebec as well as urban Indigenous women.

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Photo from left to right: Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, Manon Massé, co-official spokesperson of Québec solidaire, Marjolaine Étienne, President of Quebec Native Women and Sipi Flamand, Chief of the Atikamekw Council of Manawan

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