FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN

NATION INNUE

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Historic Meeting for the Safety, Dignity, and Well-Being of First Nations Women and Children: Quebec Native Women and the Chiefs of the Innu Nation Sign a Declaration of Solidarity

Wendake, November 6, 2026 – Quebec Native Women (QNW) and all the Chiefs of the Innu Nation in Quebec have signed a declaration of solidarity reaffirming the importance of giving collective and sustained attention to the safety, dignity, and well-being of First Nations women and children. This signing, which took place in Uashat on October 13, 2026, is the culmination of a historic meeting held in the wake of a series of tragic events that highlighted the critical situation regarding violence against Indigenous women and families.

This meeting is the result of an initiative by QNW, carried out jointly with Chief Marielle Vachon and Chief Jean-Charles Pietacho, and is part of efforts that have been underway for several months to prevent violence and support First Nations women and children.

“This meeting is historic. By joining us, the Chiefs of the Innu Nation are sending a strong message: the safety of women and children is everyone’s responsibility, and it is by working together that we will be able to ensure the safety of our women and families,” emphasized Marjolaine Étienne, president of QNW.

The signatories recognize that violence against women and children remains a serious concern within their communities and that it requires collective awareness, sustained leadership, and actions tailored to the realities of each community. The Chiefs of the communities of Pessamit, Ekuanitshit, Nutashkuan, Essipit, Matimekush Lac-John, Mashteuiatsh, Pakua Shipi, Uashat mak Mani-utenam, and Unamen Shipu, together with QNW, reaffirm their commitment to fostering collaboration and dialogue to help prevent and combat various forms of violence against Indigenous women and children, while respecting the realities, priorities, and autonomy of each community. These discussions may also take place within the framework of the work of the Innue Nation’s Health and Social Services Strategy Unit.

A Collective Commitment to Safe Living Environments
The signatories emphasize that combating violence is a collective responsibility that calls upon all governments, institutions, organizations, leaders, families, and community members.

“Given the gravity of the situation, we have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership and foster collective action so that our women and children can live in safe, respectful, and caring environments. This statement reflects our commitment to strengthening dialogue, supporting prevention initiatives, and encouraging healing processes, while respecting the realities and priorities of each of our communities,” said Chief Marielle Vachon of the Pessamit Innu Council and spokesperson on this issue for the Innu Nation.

“Violence against women and children is a reality that we can neither ignore nor accept. As elected officials, we have a responsibility to find solutions that come from our communities and respect our realities. This declaration is, above all, a gesture of solidarity. It reminds us that the safety of women and children concerns us all and that change must be built together,” states Jean-Charles Piétacho, Chief of the Ekuanitshit Innu Council.

By signing this declaration, the Chiefs of the Innu Nation and the President of QNW express their commitment to continuing the dialogue and exploring avenues for collaboration that can contribute to the prevention of violence and the safety of women and children, taking into account existing initiatives, priorities, and the specific capacities of each community.

A Declaration in Support of Nonviolence
The declaration recognizes that the violence that disproportionately affects Indigenous women and girls’ finds its roots in the legacy of colonialism, residential schools, the *Indian Act*, and the assimilation policies imposed on Indigenous peoples. Recognizing these root causes is essential to implementing sustainable solutions based on healing, self-determination, and the restoration of balance within communities.

The signatories also affirmed their support for the principles of the Charter of Equality between First Nations Women and Men and reaffirm the right of Indigenous women and girls to equality, safety, integrity, and dignity, a right recognized, in particular, by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and by General Recommendation No. 39 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Finally, the declaration recalls that Indigenous women - as bearers of life, knowledge, languages, and cultures - play a fundamental role within their nations, and that their safety is intimately linked to the strength and future of their communities.

About QNW
Quebec Native Women is a nonprofit organization that has represented and defended the rights and interests of First Nations women and girls in Quebec for over 50 years.

About the Innu Nation in Quebec
The Innu Nation is made up of the Innu communities of Uashat mak Mani-utenam, Matimekush Lac-John, Ekuanitshit, Essipit, Mashteuiash, Nutashkuan, Unamen Shipu, Pessamit, and Pakua Shipu.

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Source :
- Quebec Native Women | https://faq-qnw.org/
- Innu Nation Secretariat

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