



Press release
For immediate release

A call for action to eliminate violence and abuse towards Aboriginal women

Wendake, October 23, 2015 - The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) urgently calls on the Government of Quebec to devote the efforts and resources needed to halt the violence and abuse being committed against Aboriginal women in Quebec.

Radio-Canada's program *Enquête* presented testimonies by Aboriginal women of having been victims of sexual and physical abuse, and in many instances of an abuse of power, committed by police officers while carrying out their duties in the city of Val-d'Or. This shocking report reveals the injustices and important social inequalities that Aboriginal women face and stresses the urgent need for action to ensure the safety of Aboriginal women and girls. It appears clear that the same kinds of dramatic events are unfolding in several other Quebec cities which also have a strong Aboriginal presence.

Aboriginal women who live in or visit the cities are beset by major problems such as racism and discrimination; they must overcome many other challenges as well, including language barriers and difficulties in finding jobs or a place to live. Prejudice against and abusive treatment of Aboriginal women, particularly by police authorities who are supposed to look after their safety in the cities, exacerbate the vulnerable situations in which so many Aboriginal women live and heighten their mistrust of police and other public services.

The RCAAQ welcomes the Quebec government's announcement that it will create a parliamentary commission on the living conditions of Aboriginal women. However, concrete actions are needed now to prevent and combat the violence and injustices being committed against Aboriginal women. They require immediate support to make that happen. The revelatory cases presented by *Enquête* show the need to assist Aboriginal women who want to denounce all the abusive behaviours of which they are victims. The RCAAQ demands that the Government of Quebec provide greater support and protection of Aboriginal women as a means of contributing towards their and their families' collective well-being.



For close to 40 years, the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) has been defending the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in the urban setting and supporting the province's Native Friendship Centres in the work to accomplish their mission, which involves improving the lives of urban Aboriginal people, promoting culture and fostering mutual understanding between people. The Native Friendship Centre Movement is the largest infrastructure of urban services for Aboriginal people in Canada. Quebec is home to nine Native Friendship Centres and one service point. Located in Chibougamau, Joliette, La Tuque, Montreal, Quebec City, Saguenay, Senneterre, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Val-d'Or, they offer a continuum of more than 40 culturally relevant and safe first-line services. For more information about the RCAAQ, visit our website at www.rcaaq.info.

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