



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

Press release
For immediate distribution

Remembering and Honouring the missing and murdered Indigenous children of Quebec

Kahnawake, July 20, 2021 – Commemoration ceremonies for Indigenous children who went missing or were murdered in hospitals began at dawn yesterday at Lac Decelles, Quebec.

This four-day gathering, involving more than 100 people, was organized by members of the Atikamekw Nation of Manawan and the Awacak organization, which is a coalition of 50 families whose children died or disappeared when hospitalized in various institutions in Quebec. This important event is to remember and honour those Indigenous children who suffered abuse and never returned home.

The Quebec Native Women (QNW) considers this commemoration event as one of the numerous requests made by Indigenous communities and organizations to obtain reparation for the colonial policies put in place by all levels of governments. Reparation must be done before reconciliation can occur.

The Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs, Ian Lafrenière, was present today during this second day of commemoration. He spoke about *Bill 79, An Act to authorize the disclosure of personal information to families of missing or deceased Indigenous children following an admission to an institution*. The purpose of this legislation is to provide support to families who want information on the circumstances surrounding the disappearance or death of their child following admission to a health and social services institution in Quebec.

Last March, the Quebec Native Women was requested to participate in the *Commission des relations avec les citoyens* which examined *Bill 79*. In its brief, the QNW asked that a commission of inquiry be established to ensure the independence of research and to allow the families to obtain the truth surrounding the circumstances of their child's disappearance or death. The right to the truth is a fundamental right under international and national law, notably under *Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949*. Notwithstanding our participation, the Quebec government ignored our proposals and *Bill 79* was adopted on June 4 and will come into force on September 1.

"It is important for the QNW to be on the ground and to walk alongside families in order to offer them real support. We must not forget that these families are still grieving or still searching for the truth. This is a tragedy that our communities and families have been living with for too long. We deplore the fact that no concrete efforts have been made to allow the families to begin their healing process. Every child matters and it is important that light be shed on the circumstances and reasons for their disappearance," said Viviane Michel, President of QNW.

About QNW

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women is an organization that represents First Nations women in Quebec as well as urban Indigenous women.

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