



**Assemblée des Premières Nations  
Québec-Labrador**

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**INDEPENDENT CIVIL OBSERVER'S REPORT:  
CONCRETE AND URGENT ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY TO RESTORE TRUST  
BETWEEN POLICE AND FIRST NATIONS**

*Wendake, October 15, 2020* - The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) is urging the government as well as relevant organizations to implement the proposals contained in the report of the Independent Civil Observer, Me Fannie Lafontaine, released today. "These actions are necessary and urgent in order to restore trust between police services and First Nations," said AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard.

The AFNQL would also like to highlight the exceptional quality of the report, the result of rigorous work carried out by Me Lafontaine. The document, released today, is more than 265 pages long and clearly and accurately outlines the issues that undermine the quality of relations between Indigenous people and the police services. The 25 proposals it contains are presented as concrete actions that would enable the relevant authorities, the government, police services, the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions of Quebec, and the Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (BEI), to act immediately to increase public confidence in the impartiality of police investigations, to increase the perception of integrity and transparency in the process, and to build confidence when it comes to respecting victims' rights.

"This report is an unequivocal demonstration of what is referred to as systemic racism. Even if the government refuses to use this term, it cannot ignore the correctness of Me. Lafontaine's observations and recommendations," says Chief Picard.

Me. Fannie Lafontaine was mandated by the Quebec government in November 2015 to review and assess the integrity and impartiality of the investigations carried by the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM), regarding allegations of criminal acts committed by Sûreté du Québec police officers in Val-d'Or against Indigenous women. A first report was produced in November 2016.

"I want to thank Me. Lafontaine for her outstanding work. This report has enormous significance for First Nations women who have faced and continue to face discrimination by some police officers. It should not be forgotten that her mandate, like that of the Viens Commission, stems from some disturbing stories told by Cree and Anishnabeg women in 2015, in Val d'Or. First Nations women have the right to safety, protection, and justice. Above all, they have a fundamental right be respected by the police and by the justice system. We expect, among other things, to get

answers from the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions as to why they chose not to prosecute in 55 of the 61 cases." says Adrienne Jérôme, Chief of the Lac-Simon First Nation and co-spokesperson of the AFNQL Council of Elected Women.

The recommendations of this second report by the Independent Civil Observer are therefore added to the calls to action made by the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec, to the calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the calls for action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, among others.

As Me. Lafontaine's report points out, "These targeted proposals are inseparable from achieving the more fundamental objectives they aim to achieve: transparency, full participation and representation of Indigenous people, as well as training based on competence and cultural safety. They are part of a broader process of transforming relations between Indigenous peoples and the government of Quebec. Their implementation seems imperative to me in order to put an end to ways of doing things that have led to a broken trust, and to deconstruct a persistent colonial legacy."

In addition to the actions addressed to governments and public institutions, the AFNQL wishes to point out that there are also actions for the Quebec civil society. Many of these actions, which organizations or individuals may adopt, can be found in the Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination, available online on the AFNQL website: [www.apnql.com](http://www.apnql.com).

### **About the AFNQL Council of Elected Women**

The AFNQL Council of Elected Women is comprised of all the women duly elected to the positions of chiefs or councillors of each of the First Nations communities in Quebec and Labrador. The AFNQL Council of Elected Women seeks a fair perspective on gender relations within the Chiefs' Table of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, First Nations communities in Quebec, and within all entities dealing with First Nations that recognize, respect, and support the role of women in leadership positions.

### **About the AFNQL**

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political body that brings together the 43 First Nations chiefs in Quebec and Labrador. Follow AFNQL on Twitter @APNQL

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