



APNQL
ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS
QUEBEC-LABRADOR

AFNQL
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
QUEBEC-LABRADOR

250, place Chef Michel Laveau, #201 | Wendake (Québec) G0A 4V0
(418) 842-5020 | info@apnql.com | www.apnql.com



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHALLENGE OF THE DECISION RENDERED ON DECEMBER 15, 2022 IN FAVOUR OF MASHTEUIATSH QUEBEC PERSISTS IN DENYING THE UNDERFUNDING OF INDIGENOUS POLICE SERVICES

Mashteuiatsh, February 20, 2023 — The Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation and the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) deplore Quebec's decision to challenge before the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) the judgment rendered by the Court of appeal of Quebec on December 15, 2022. The Attorney General of Quebec has filed an application for leave to appeal to take the case to the highest court in the land.

« Quebec is once again acting against the recommendations of the Viens Commission report, which very clearly recounted the problems related to the underfunding of Indigenous police services. The province continues to act dishonourably when it comes to First Nations public safety by not acknowledging its wrongdoing. Meanwhile, the chronic underfunding of all Indigenous police services continues, » said Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation Chief Gilbert Dominique.

« By submitting this leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, the Quebec government is seeking by all possible means to challenge our governance capacity while evading its obligations, » declared Ghislain Picard, Chief of the AFNQL. « Why shouldn't First Nations police services receive a level of funding that allows them to offer the same quality of services as those provided to non-Indigenous people?, » he continued.

The Supreme Court is required to accept or deny Quebec's request for leave to appeal by July 2023 at the latest.

For its part, Canada agrees to abide by the decision of the Court of Appeal and has announced that it will not appeal the judgment. Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan, however, is questioning whether Canada genuinely desires to put an end to the underfunding of First Nations government police services, knowing that a complete solution cannot be provided without the collaboration of the provincial and federal governments.

Note that the Court of Appeal of Quebec rendered an unanimous decision in this case in December 2022. It considers that the governments of Quebec and Canada are acting in an undignified, dishonourable, and abusive manner with regard to the funding of Indigenous police services and that they are denying a largely well-documented reality, particularly by the Viens Commission. In light of these failures, the highest court in Quebec ruled in favour of Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan, who was claiming \$1.6 million from the governments of Quebec and Canada to make up for the deficit accumulated between 2013 and 2017 by its police services.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political organization that brings together the 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador (<https://apnql.com/en/>).

About the Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation

Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan is the political and administrative organization that represents the Pekuakamiulnuatsh. The Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation has 9,552 members, many of whom live in the community of Mashteuiatsh on the banks of the Pekuakami. Mashteuiatsh, which means « where there is a point », constitutes a historical place of gathering and meeting.

— 30 —

For more information:

Mélodie Lapointe
Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan
melodie.lapointe@mashteuiatsh.ca
418-275-5386, extension 1245

Marie-Celine Einish
AFNQL communications advisor
mceinish@apnql.com
418-254-4620