



Press Statement

CAP Demands Justice for Joyce Echequan

October 3, 2020 (Ottawa, ON) –

Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman, arrived at a hospital in the city of Joliette QC on Monday September 28th complaining of stomach pain. In a video that has been viewed around the world, hospital staff ignored her pleas for help and her warnings about having a heart condition, while making racist and degrading comments towards her until the moment she died.

“The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples extends our deepest condolences to the family and community of Joyce Echequan”, said Elmer St. Pierre, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples National Chief “We are horrified by the disturbing abuse and racial hatred Joyce was subjected to and stand behind the call for justice and accountability”

Francois Legault, Premier of Quebec denied that this incident represented an example of systemic racism in the province.

The Quebec Premier’s claim is contradicted by the video evidence and the conclusions of the “Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec” completed in 2019. This inquiry found issues such as “unethical addiction-related practices targeting women”, “non-consensual drug tests performed on Indigenous women”, and “prejudices and discriminatory practices toward Indigenous patients” in Quebec’s health system.

“We call on Premier Legault to acknowledge and act on the systemic racism that contributed to the senseless death of Joyce” said Elmer St. Pierre. “Anything less than a complete investigation is unacceptable.”

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 70% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.