



PROTECTEUR
DU CITOYEN



SITUATION REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALLS FOR ACTION OF
THE PUBLIC INQUIRY COMMISSION ON RELATIONS BETWEEN
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVICES
IN QUÉBEC: LISTENING, RECONCILIATION AND PROGRESS

QUÉBEC, NOVEMBER 6, 2025



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Niaka Agence créative autochtone, by Valérie Laforce

Concerning the cover illustration

The passage of migratory birds has always marked the change of seasons. The distinguishing feature of Canada geese is their ability to keep up a «conversation» with their fellow travellers throughout their long trek so that they can maintain contact, fly in formation and take turns leading the flock. This is how we have come to associate them with communication, mutual respect and collaboration. Valérie Laforce, who is of Abenaki origin, has been active in the First Nations community for more than ten years. Her cover illustration depicts movement towards a common destination and determined action on a serene blue background and watermark arrows.

Publishing

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MISSION OF THE PROTECTEUR DU CITOYEN

The Protecteur du citoyen ensures that the rights of citizens are upheld by intervening with Québec government departments and agencies and the various bodies within the health and social services network to rectify situations that are prejudicial to a person or a group of people. It also handles disclosures of wrongdoing relating to public bodies and reprisal complaints arising from these disclosures. Appointed by at least two thirds of the elected members of all political parties and reporting to the National Assembly, the Protecteur du citoyen acts independently and impartially, whether an intervention is undertaken in response to a complaint or a series of complaints or on the institution's own initiative.

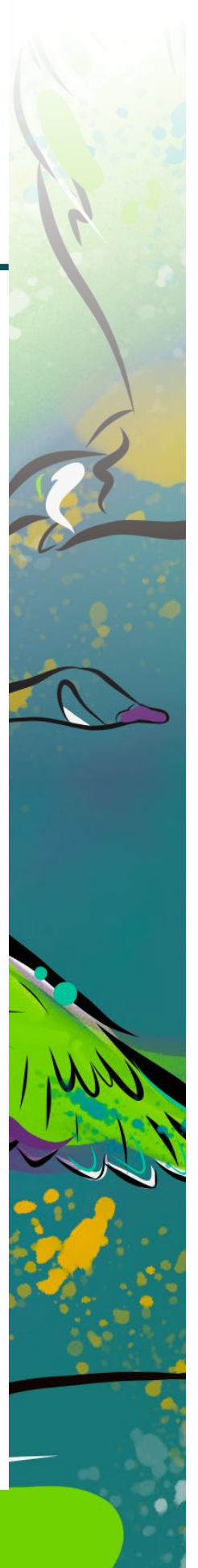
Respect for individuals and their rights and the prevention of harm are at the heart of the Protecteur du citoyen's mission. Its preventive role is exercised in particular through its analysis of situations that cause harm to significant numbers of citizens or that are systemic.

Pursuant to the powers conferred upon it, it can propose amendments to acts and regulations and changes to administrative directives and policies with a view to improving them in the interest of the people concerned.

Call for action 138 of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress proposed to give the Protecteur du citoyen the mandate to assess and follow-up on the implementation of all the calls for action. On June 21, 2021, on its own initiative, the Protecteur du citoyen began its work of analyzing the implementation of the calls for action stemming from the work of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress.

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SUMMARY

The Protecteur du citoyen has the mandate to follow up the 142 calls for action of the Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress (CERP in French), also known as the Viens Commission. The first follow-up report was published in 2023 and covered all the calls for action. As the Protecteur du citoyen had announced, the second follow-up report will be a thematic report that will cover 13 calls for action concerning youth protection. This second report will be published subsequently.

This document offers a situation report on the implementation of the 129 calls for action that will not be covered by the second follow-up report. For this exercise, the Protecteur du citoyen has opted for a qualitative assessment of the calls for action instead of systematic follow-up of each of them. Its analysis is based on the responses provided by the government departments, agencies, institutions and public services covered by the CERP. It is also based on the work and discussions with the Advisory Circle, composed of representatives of First Nations and Inuit organizations, whose mandate is to advise the Protecteur du citoyen and offer it feedback on the assessment of the follow-up to the calls for action.

Concrete examples have been selected, grouped according to four themes: cultural safety, linguistic rights, self-determination, and overall issues. This approach illustrates the progress achieved and the persistent challenges, while presenting four recommendations targeted to support the continuity of government action.

Cultural safety

Several calls for action seek to make public services culturally safe for the First Nations and Inuit. On this subject, the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network* was adopted in December 2024. According to the Protecteur du citoyen, the application of this Act requires rigorous planning of human and financial resources. However, to date there is no provision for any action plan or specific funding. The institutions' mobilization capacity in view of respecting the principles and achieving the objectives of the Act thus remains uncertain.

Initiatives seeking to strengthen Indigenous representation and improve access to adapted services have been reported in the fields of public security and justice. However, in general, recruitment and retention of First Nations and Inuit personnel

continue to pose major challenges due to the structural precariousness of the positions offered. In addition, the continued funding of many Indigenous community justice and client support initiatives seems uncertain, resulting in fear of possible service interruptions.

The Protecteur du citoyen formulates two recommendations on cultural safety, including the deployment of a government strategy and better planning of implementation of the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*, including the renewal and perpetuation of funding of promising initiatives (Recommendations 1 and 2).

Respect for linguistic rights

The *Charter of the French Language* contains exceptions that apply to First Nations and Inuit with the goal of respecting their linguistic rights. However, many field application challenges and blind spots have been raised regarding the scope and implementation of these exceptions. They remain insufficient to significantly reduce the language barriers compromising equitable access to quality public services for the First Nations and Inuit. The Gouvernement du Québec must ensure that the principles and undertakings adopted in its legislative framework are applied consistently.

For example, the living and safety rules of certain residential facilities lack clarity, which can lead to discriminatory behaviours. Some members of First Nations and Inuit communities thus have been reprimanded for speaking their language. The Protecteur du citoyen recommends that the government reconcile the application of the *Charter of the French Language* with the approach put forward by the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network* (Recommendation 3).

Self-determination and reconciliation

Self-determination and reconciliation are the cornerstones of reversing the systemic inequalities experienced by First Nations and Inuit. Nonetheless, the government's real willingness to support these principles is not always clear. Although some public services have deployed efforts, the Protecteur du citoyen finds that the concretization of these principles remains fragile and often dependent on ad hoc initiatives.

For example, the Gouvernement du Québec has announced an investment of \$300 million to stabilize the Indigenous police forces within three years. However, these additional amounts would not be sufficient to meet the real needs and cover the accumulated gap with Québec's other police forces. Moreover, in response to the housing crisis, several urban social housing projects have been completed or are currently under construction since 2023, but the needs remain far greater than the current supply.

Challenges and concerning setbacks are observed. For example, despite the long-established finding of a success gap for Indigenous students, the Ministère de l'Éducation has put few measures in place to improve the educational success of Indigenous students.

Overall issues

Since the first follow-up report in 2023, several institutions have reported on interesting and promising initiatives and projects. Nonetheless, in the opinion of the Protecteur du citoyen, this situation report again exposes the persistent absence of an overall strategy for implementation of the calls for action and the lack of leadership to promote such a strategy within the Gouvernement du Québec.

In the current budget restriction context, the Protecteur du citoyen fears that the impetus the Gouvernement du Québec requires to adopt an overall strategy for implementation of the calls for action will never materialize. The risk that the efforts will lose momentum, despite the advances, is quite real if the resources do not follow.

Considering these findings, the Protecteur du citoyen recommends that the Gouvernement du Québec engage, with all the Indigenous representatives, in a formal process with the aim of developing legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Recommendation 4). The Protecteur du citoyen will continue its attentive monitoring of the efforts of the Gouvernement du Québec in view of ensuring the full achievement of all the calls for action of the CERP.



1 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress (CERP), also known as the Viens Commission, tabled its final report in September 2019. The report contains 142 calls for action, including Call for Action 138 which recommends giving the Protecteur du citoyen the mandate to assess and follow up on the implementation of all the calls for action, until they have been fully implemented.

The Protecteur du citoyen began this mandate in 2021. A specialized team within the institution performs the work in co-construction with an Advisory Circle composed of representative of First Nations and Inuit organizations (see the list of members in the credits page).

The first follow-up report was published on October 4, 2023. It concludes that, nearly four years after the tabling of the CERP report, a little under one third of the calls for action were implemented or were progressing as expected. The barriers identified include:

- The lack of an overall strategy of the Gouvernement du Québec, developed jointly with the First Nations and Inuit, for follow-up of the CERP calls for action;
- The absence of firm planning and efficient coordination among the main stakeholders;
- Fragmented initiatives, limiting the systemic effect of changes;
- Collaboration methods to be improved, particularly by co-construction of solutions with the Indigenous representatives;
- The limited recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples by the government authorities in the organization and delivery of public services;
- The absence of significant progress in the tripartite negotiations among the federal government, the provincial government and the First Nations and Inuit;
- The insufficient resources allocated to implementation of the calls for action.

The Protecteur du citoyen then proposed 32 action priorities that should guide the continued implementation of the CERP calls for action (see Appendix 1).

In the months following the publication of its first follow-up report, the Protecteur du citoyen and the members of the Advisory Circle undertook a prioritizing exercise. Following this exercise, the Protecteur du citoyen announced the preparation of a thematic follow-up report on youth protection in Indigenous communities. In particular, this second follow-up

report will analyze issues and levers necessary for the implementation of 13 specific calls for action on youth protection (see Appendix 2).

Situation report on implementation of calls for action – methodology

Parallel to its thematic follow-up work, the Protecteur du citoyen has continued its assessment of implementation of all the calls for action. In November 2024, it informed the various government departments, agencies, institutions and public services covered by the CERP that it was going to proceed with a new collection of information for the update of the follow-up of the 129 calls for action that will not be the subject of the second thematic follow-up report on youth protection (see Appendix 3). For this purpose, the organizations received a questionnaire in January 2025 pertaining to the following points for each call for action that concerns them:

- The actions taken since 2023;
- The funding granted or projected;
- The sustainability of the undertakings;
- The territories affected;
- The collaborations and the challenges encountered.

Out of 73 questionnaires distributed, 65 were compiled and analyzed, between February and May 2025.¹ The answers received come from 12 provincial government departments and agencies, 24 police forces and 29 health and social services institutions. The answers from the 18 detention facilities were also compiled in the questionnaire of the Ministère de la Sécurité publique. The Protecteur du citoyen wishes to salute the engagement of the government departments and agencies, whose interest in this data collection translated into a participation rate of 89%. This mobilization is evidence of their willingness to contribute to informed and relevant analyses.

The analysis of the data collected allows the Protecteur du citoyen to formulate new observations and note a recurrence of certain findings presented in its 2023 follow-up. All the findings are grouped in the following pages around four central themes:

- 1 Cultural safety in public services;
- 2 Respect for the linguistic rights of First Nations and Inuit;
- 3 Self-determination and reconciliation;
- 4 Overall issues.

¹ It should be noted that additional information was transmitted until August 2025. This report also considers some information made public up to September 5, 2025.

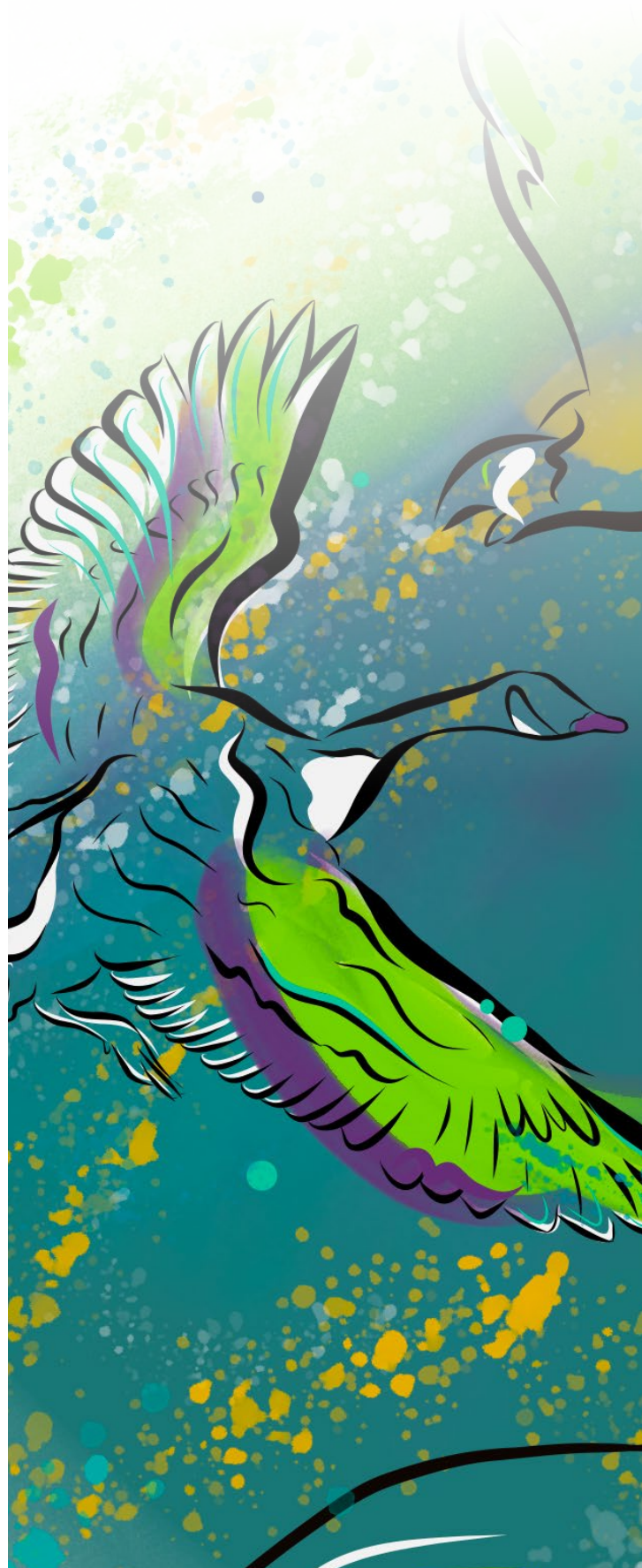
For this situation report, the Protecteur du citoyen has opted for a qualitative assessment of follow-up of the calls for action instead of systematic follow-up of each call for action. Thus, concrete examples are presented, selected in all the public services covered by the CERP. This approach illustrates the progress achieved and the persistent challenges, while offering targeted recommendations to support the continuity of government action.

It should be noted that some government departments and agencies chose to provide budget details in their answers. Financial details were also requested by way of follow-up to certain answers provided. This document therefore includes certain quantified data when relevant to the demonstration of the findings.

Creation of Santé Québec: a new authority responsible for implementation of the calls for action

Since the adoption of the *Act respecting the governance of the health and social services system* (AGHSSS) on December 9, 2023, Santé Québec has played a central role in the coordination of the system's operations. This reorganization leads to a redefinition and redivision of the responsibilities assumed by the MSSS and Santé Québec. Certain effects of this reorganization are addressed in this document.

The MSSS informed the Protecteur du citoyen that the responsibility for implementation of 19 calls for action would be transferred, in whole or in part, to Santé Québec.² The Protecteur du citoyen will monitor these changes closely to ensure that the calls for action that are Santé Québec's responsibility from now on are indeed taken over. It will also ensure that the sharing of responsibilities between the MSSS and Santé Québec regarding the First Nations, Inuit, Cree and Naskapi is clear and that the changes are made in close collaboration with them, at every stage. Finally, the Protecteur du citoyen will pay attention to the actions that Santé Québec will undertake on cultural safety. Santé Québec also recently undertook to appoint First Nations and Inuit individuals to the boards of directors of the institutions.



² Calls for Action 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 66, 67, 75, 78, 93, 94, 111, 112, 113 and 126 (see the wording of these calls for action in Appendix 3).



2 CULTURAL SAFETY IN PUBLIC SERVICES

The CERP report demonstrated that many issues impede access by First Nations and Inuit citizens to quality public services respectful of their realities, languages and cultures. This finding motivated the formulation of a large number of calls for action³ in view of supporting the transformation of public services by rendering them more culturally safe.⁴

Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network (Call for Action 74)

In June 2023, the Minister responsible for relations with the First Nations and Inuit presented Bill 32, *An Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network* (hereinafter the Cultural Safety Act). He was following up on Call for Action 74. The Protecteur du citoyen welcomed this bill in a spirit of openness, while expressing concerns about certain aspects of the drafting process. It pointed out that: **“The approach preceding its drafting should also have reflected the principles at the basis of cultural safety.** A joint approach prior to drafting a bill would have contributed to showing the government's willingness to collaborate and recognize the autonomy and expertise of the First Nations and Inuit on a highly sensitive subject that primarily concerns them. A co-construction approach should guide the work to come.”⁵

For their part, several Indigenous organizations deplored the lack of real involvement of the First Nations in the process of drafting the bill. They consider that their free and informed prior consent was not respected.⁶ Despite their good-faith participation in the parliamentary consultations, it is their opinion that the measures taken by the Gouvernement du Québec in this bill remain far below the objectives, notably due to the absence of full integration of the Joyce Principle into the final wording of the bill.⁷

In the last few months, different First Nations and Inuit groups and organizations received an invitation to participate in a working group for the National Committee on Cultural Safety specified in the Act. The National Committee is responsible for giving the Minister its opinion on subjects such as the provision of health services and social services and the cultural safety approach to First Nations members and the Inuit.

The working group must define the rules of operation of the National Committee, the terms and conditions for the administration of its affairs, and its other functions, duties and powers. The intention is to develop the regulation of the National Committee with the First Nations and Inuit. It should be noted that the MSSS acknowledges the lack of human and financial resources necessary to establish the National Committee. The Protecteur du citoyen will remain attentive to this committee's work and to how it will be assessed by the participating Indigenous organizations. Indeed, the vision and definition of respectful and efficient collaboration are often the subject of debate and dissatisfaction when the government departments attempt to deploy collaboration processes with the First Nations and Inuit.

According to the Protecteur du citoyen, **the adoption of the Cultural Safety Act leads to a paradigm shift. Indeed, cultural safety demands a profound transformation of vision and practices, which goes far beyond mere improvements or adjustments within existing structures.** Rigorous planning of human and financial resources thus is essential to achieve the objectives of the Act. Nonetheless, no specific funding has been budgeted for this purpose to date. The ability of the institutions to mobilize the necessary human resources to apply the spirit and the letter of the Act remains uncertain. The absence of a binding framework and performance indicators complicates the assessment of its effects. Consequently, the application of this Act will depend on the goodwill of the stakeholders concerned. Without a common plan for all institutions of Santé Québec, the tendency remains to prefer isolated actions rather than systemic reforms. This was also the finding of the first follow-up report of the CERP. In fact, although the First Nations and Inuit communities have multiple and varied realities, it remains essential to provide clear guidelines for the network, to guarantee significant and consistent changes, while allowing adaptation to local specificities.

The Protecteur du citoyen will remain attentive to the concrete results and to the extent of effects of the actions taken. Compulsory training and specific training intended for professionals of the health and social services network can foster concrete changes. In the same sense, it will be essential for the managers of the institutions to have the tools necessary for a good understanding of the principles of cultural safety and the practices attached to it. Thus, they will be able to support their teams better. They should be offered adapted train-

3 Calls for Action 24, 25, 26, 56, 68, 74, 75, 76, 84, 85, 90.

4 It should be noted that for calls for action in health and social services, Santé Québec is the authority responsible for operationalizing the transformations for all of the network's institutions since December 2024.

5 Protecteur du citoyen, *Lettre en réaction au projet de loi n° 32 – Loi instaurant l'approche de sécurisation culturelle au sein du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux*, September 2023

6 AFNQL, Conseil des Atikamekw de Manawan, Quebec Native Women, Joyce's Principle Office, (FNQLHSSC), *Press Release – Cultural safety: A human rights issue*, December 5, 2024.

7 Makivvik Corporation, *Mémoire sur le projet de loi n° 32 – Loi instaurant l'approche de sécurisation culturelle au sein du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux*, September 11, 2023.

ing for this purpose. **New processes accompanied by sustained efforts will be necessary to apply the principles promoted by the Act in the institutions' everyday operations, in their practices, decisions and human relations. Without this, even the best intentions risk having only symbolic scope.** This will be the challenge for the coming years.

Health and Social Services: Initiatives for the Deployment of Culturally safe Services (Calls for Action 19, 75, 76 and 90)

The Protecteur du citoyen wishes to emphasize the engagement of certain public services in the different regions of Québec that have adopted specialized human resources and set up new resources to meet the needs of the First Nations and Inuit in the best possible way, consistent with the cultural safety approach.

EXAMPLES:

- The Comité de représentants autochtones du CIUSSS du Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean is the first Indigenous users committee in Québec. It aims to carry the voices of these users to the institution authorities and allows the establishment of a culturally safe environment for Indigenous users.
- CHU de Québec has a team of three people who accompany and support Indigenous users – particularly for dialysis treatments – and their families during their care episode in one of the institution's hospitals.
- The McGill University Health Centre has developed a Birthing room for Indigenous patients. This gives access to traditional food, and its family visiting policy is adapted.
- La Place Wicakemowin, located at Centre hospitalier de Lanaudière, offers a reception and appointment centre adapted to Indigenous users, particularly users from the Atikamekw Nation. A team of administrative officers can contact Atikamekw users in their language to confirm their medical appointment at the hospital's outpatient clinic. La Place Wicakemowin also offers a room allowing Indigenous family gatherings during events and meeting other specific needs.

- The Petapan motorized vehicle project, which is jointly run by CISSS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the partners of the Comité stratégique en itinérance, offers community-based intervention services to homeless people in Val-d'Or.
- The MSSS supports the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre to offer culturally safe healing services in Nunavik. The funding granted is \$350,000 in 2023-2024 and \$3 million for the next three years, bringing the total of \$9.35 million.
- The Overall Implementation Plan of the Cultural Safety Approach (2020-2025) of the MSSS made possible, as of November 2024, the hiring of 27 liaison officers and 29 Indigenous service navigators in position throughout the health and social services network (HSSN).

However, the Protecteur du citoyen was unable to confirm the renewal of the envelopes earmarked for assignment of liaison officers and Indigenous service navigators after March 31, 2025. Moreover, the perpetuation of several other cultural safety initiatives is not guaranteed. This question will be addressed later.

Public Security and Justice

Cultural safety in matters of public security and justice is progressing thanks to initiatives that strengthen Indigenous representation and improve access to adapted services.

EXAMPLES:

- Direction des affaires policières autochtones of the MSP: Creation of eight new positions to strengthen the stability of Indigenous police forces, with a more human and respectful approach, saluted by the Quebec Association of First Nation and Inuit Police Directors (QAFNIPD).
- Police Ethics Commissioner and Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (BEI): Regularization of the position of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisor (Indigenous Component) and Liaison Officer, and creation of a position of Indigenous Investigator, which strengthens Indigenous representation in these two agencies.
- Ministère de la Justice du Québec (MJQ): The Gouvernement du Québec funds 18 intervenor positions to assist Indigenous victims, including 13 in the Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (CAVAC) and five in Indigenous organizations. In its 2025-2026 budget, it established a measure entitled "Provide safe services to Indigenous communities", which will extend from 2025 to 2030. In the context of this initiative, an amount of \$8.5 million is allocated to support assistance services for Indigenous victims in the CAVACs.
- Sûreté du Québec (SQ): Establishment of the Bureau des partenariats autochtones, supported by the Division des relations avec les communautés autochtones, which strengthens relationships and supports initiatives adapted to Indigenous realities. The Protecteur du citoyen salutes this initiative and considers that the Bureau's team, currently composed of two persons, could be improved to increase the effect of the projects and respond better to issues throughout Québec.

Moreover, six SQ mixed intervention teams of police officers and community support workers, known as Équipes mixtes d'intervention – policiers et intervenants communautaires (EMIPIC), have gradually been set up since 2016. Four of these teams had just been created when the first follow-up report was published in 2023. The six teams from now on are deployed and fully operational in Val-d'Or, Sept-Îles, Roberval, Maniwaki, Joliette and Chibougamau (Call for Action 37 on mixed intervention patrols). Their mandate is to intervene by adopting an approach respectful of the cultural realities of the First Nations and Inuit. However, the sustainability of these teams remains a challenge, because the funding of certain positions is not assured in the long term, which could compromise their stability and their capacity for action. The March 2025 Québec budget renewed funding of the mixed teams and the SQ liaison officers for a five-year period. Although this renewal represents progress for the continuity of services and the strengthening of relations with the Indigenous communities, it does not guarantee a long-term continuation and calls for a reflection on sustainable funding mechanisms. A similar reflection is needed for the support workers who assist the Indigenous victims in the CAVACs.

Tools and Training in Indigenous Realities and Cultural Safety (Calls for Action 20, 25 and 26)

The MJQ has launched initiatives to improve access to justice for the First Nations and Inuit. In collaboration with the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), it recently designed awareness training on Indigenous realities in sociojudicial intervention. Lasting three hours and 40 minutes, this training includes 25 capsules divided into four modules and will be offered in 2025-2026. Moreover, training funded by the MJQ and provided by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) has been offered since fall 2024 to the members of the First Nations and Inuit wishing to work in the field of justice with Indigenous litigants. Among the first modules, a six-hour component deals with Indigenous law and traditional conflict resolution methods.

In addition, to improve the services related to the Gladue reports⁸, the MJQ, since September 2024, has offered online bilingual tools, guides and training intended for his writers. From now on, they must certify their competencies every five years and commit to comply with the applicable ethical rules. A checklist for Court registries is also in production, accompanied by training. Moreover, steps have been taken to better inform magistrates and defence attorneys about the Gladue summaries. Advisory Circle partners have also mentioned that the judiciary is showing openness to inform themselves

⁸ Let us remember that the Gladue reports are a type of report used in all Canadian provinces. They allow a better knowledge of the distinctive systemic and historical factors that can explain an accused's conflicts with the law, in order to examine the types of procedures for determining the sentence and the appropriate penalties in the circumstances, based on the offender's Indigenous heritage or ties. The objective is to limit recourse to incarceration and favour alternative measures, more specifically in the case of Indigenous offenders.

and integrate the Gladue reports into their practice. Finally, since April 2024, a working group of the Forum sociojudiciaire autochtone has addressed issues and practices of the judicial stakeholders and agencies that write the Gladue reports.

In 2022, the Sous-ministériat des services correctionnels (SMSC), in collaboration with Indigenous organizations, launched an awareness program on Indigenous realities intended for correctional service officers (CSO) and unit managers of detention facilities. Delivered by an SMSC trainer and a support worker from Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec (NPJSQ), this program was offered in 12 of the Québec's 18 detention facilities to 1,483 participants. Given the end of funding, it will not be possible to offer the program in the other six facilities. In 2024, a second initiative was deployed: integrate this program into the training of aspiring correctional service officers at the Centre de formation et de perfectionnement correctionnel, to guarantee a better understanding of Indigenous issues upon their entry into service.

As of January 2025, almost all personnel in the health and social services network had taken the compulsory *Awareness Training on Indigenous realities*.⁹ In March 2024, a second training component, this time non-mandatory, was delivered to all HSSN personnel. This component further defines the notion of cultural safety and the associated practices, adapted to the health and social services context. Complementing this, several institutions offered their personnel UQAT's specialized Awareness Training on Indigenous Realities, focusing on Indigenous cultures and realities, and on intervention with the First Nations and Inuit on health and social services and youth protection (the Piwaseha, Wedokodadowiin and Tikinagan training). In addition, some institutions organized conferences and webinars with Indigenous experts and collaborated with the local communities to offer training on the specific reality of the Indigenous populations in their territory.

For police forces, training on Indigenous realities varies from one police department to another, often depending on the frequency of contacts with Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous populations.

EXAMPLES:

- Sûreté du Québec police officers must take three compulsory training courses when they are hired, including two online. For police officers who intervene in Indigenous communities, two additional training courses are offered, including one in partnership with UQAT, as well as specialized training for Indigenous liaison officers and members of the mixed intervention teams of police officers and community support workers.
- The Service de police de Gatineau, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, is developing training on "the experiential approach with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit", which is scheduled for deployment in the next few months.
- The Service de police de Saint-Eustache has trained the employees of its centralized emergency call service, the Service centralisé des appels d'urgence, for interventions in northern communities so that they clearly understand the issues of the territory they cover for dispatching of emergency calls.

The initiatives that favor the experiential approach and immersion in the territory are in line with the QAFNIPD's vision, because they allow a better understanding of the issues faced by the communities.

Moreover, as a reminder, in its 2023 follow-up report, the Protecteur du citoyen pointed out that **any training initiative, to be likely to contribute to the development of culturally safe services for the First Nations and Inuit, must meet demanding criteria. In particular, it should be continuously put into practice, updated regularly, assessed rigorously, designed with Indigenous experts and modelled on best continuing education practices.**¹⁰

Complementing these training initiatives, it is appropriate to mention the implementation of the societal campaign on awareness of Indigenous realities, steered by the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit (SRPNI). Call for Action 20 proposes the holding of such an awareness campaign. The various phases of the campaign are spread over several years. The first phase was conducted in 2023 and the second began in 2024. They aim to deepen knowledge of the 11 Indigenous nations and favor closer relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The new phase

⁹ As a reminder, in its *Plan stratégique 2023-2027*, the MSSS adopted an ambitious target to raise Indigenous realities' awareness within the network's personnel: for each year of its plan, the target percentage of employees trained on Indigenous realities is 100%.

¹⁰ Protecteur du citoyen, *First Follow-up Report on the Viens Commission*, 2023, p. 26.

includes the distribution of video capsules of different lengths on various Web platforms. As of July 15, 2025, six capsules have been distributed, spotlighting the Abenaki/W8banaki (June-July 2024), the Anishinabeg/Anicinapek (August 2024), the Atikamekw Nehirowisiw (September 2024), the Eeyou/Eenou (Cree) (November 2024), the Innu/Innu (June 2025) and the Inuit (July 2025). Distribution will continue according to the same rhythm for the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Mi'gmaq, Naskapi, Wendat and Wolastoqiyik Wampanapik (Maliseet).

End of Funding and Threats to Gains

In general, recruitment and retention of First Nations and Inuit personnel continue to pose major challenges due to the structural precariousness of the positions offered, whereas their presence is fundamental in the offering of culturally safe services. Too often, the jobs intended for them are not permanent and depend on ad hoc or project-based funding. This generates constant insecurity for the workers and compromises the deployment and maintenance of sustainable resources. Moreover, their underrepresentation in strategic positions hinders their capacity to influence the decisions that directly affect the communities they serve and represent.

This concerning finding is not new. In its first follow-up report in 2023, the *Protecteur du citoyen* already recognized that “the resources allocated by the government to respond to the needs and priorities identified by the Viens Commission are insufficient, which shows that public decision-makers lack a sense of urgency about issues that are disturbing”.¹¹ Yet the recent funding cuts and the end of the budget associated with the *J'ai espoir*¹² initiative on March 31, 2025 only exacerbate this situation. **It is imperative that the Gouvernement du Québec renew the funding for cultural safety of public services, so that the quality of public services to the First Nations and Inuit remains a priority.** This funding allows hiring of liaison officers, translation of documents into Indigenous languages, training of employees in different sectors, and availability of sustainable resources for translation and interpretation in English and Indigenous languages.

The end of the *J'ai espoir* initiative, combined with the current budget context of the Gouvernement du Québec, generates a concerning uncertainty regarding the continuation of several essential measures in cultural safety and support of First Nations and Inuit populations.

- Within the Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP), several initiatives previously supported by *J'ai espoir* have

ended up without funding or plunged into uncertainty. For example, the Laboratoire de sciences judiciaires et de médecine légale attempted to self-finance its liaison officer position (Call for Action 19), crucial for the support of Indigenous police forces, but was unable to do so. The position was finally abolished in August 2025.¹³ Likewise, the absence of funds compromises the continued training of correctional service officers and unit managers currently in positions in detention facilities, when there are still 700 people to train (Calls for Action 25 and 26 on training). At the École nationale de police du Québec, the continued translation of training into English remains uncertain, due to a lack of funding. The costs of essential training on domestic violence, sexual assault and intrafamily violence will have to be assumed again by the Indigenous police forces. This will recreate a financial barrier that had been lifted thanks to *J'ai espoir*. Finally, funding had been granted to the FNQLHSSC to conduct a consultation with incarcerated members of the First Nations and the personnel of eight detention facilities on their needs and the services they receive. The report is scheduled for fall 2025. However, in April 2025, the FNQLHSSC was informed that the funding would not be renewed for implementation of the conclusions of the consultation, in view of the budget restrictions of the Gouvernement du Québec.

- The development, implementation and funding of many new initiatives on Indigenous community justice and support of First Nations and Inuit clientele seem uncertain. **The Protecteur du citoyen is concerned about possible service interruptions in Indigenous justice.**

For example, the *J'ai espoir* initiative had provided for a budget of \$6,012,500 to adjust the compensation of courtworkers, hire new ones and increase the core funding of the agencies responsible for offering these services, such as the NPJSQ. \$363,400 of this amount is still not distributed. Moreover, the NPJSQ faces chronic delays in obtaining their funding, as attested by the late signing, in March 2025, of the funding agreement for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Also, the funding for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 2025 was only confirmed in August 2025. This agency has been active since 1981 and receives annual funding to support Indigenous people in the justice system. Despite this, its management must submit a new application to the MJQ each year, without any guarantee of renewal or of the amount allocated. This uncertainty complicates long-term planning, creates recurring insecurity for the 24 courtworkers who work for the organization and

¹¹ Protecteur du citoyen, *First Follow-up Report on the Viens Commission*, 2023, p. 3.

¹² The *J'ai espoir* initiative refers to the amount of \$200 million that was unblocked over a five-year period in the 2020 budget of the Gouvernement du Québec. This initiative should allow implementation of the calls for action of the CERP, and the recommendations of other commissions and inquiries that have addressed Indigenous realities in the past few years. Source: *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour le mieux-être social et culturel des Premières Nations et des Inuit 2022-2027*.

¹³ Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ), *Communiqué – Coupes dans la fonction publique : 12 postes supprimés au Laboratoire de sciences judiciaires et de médecine légale*, August 20, 2025.

affects management of resources. Despite these challenges, the courtworkers must continue their work, be present in the courthouses and ensure continuous support. For example, in 2024, they assisted 2,839 people in 41 courthouses, thus playing a key role for just and equitable treatment of Indigenous people in the Québec justice system.

Moreover, the *J'ai espoir* initiative had provided for funding of \$7,215,500 to support new community justice initiatives in the First Nations and Inuit communities (justice committee) and increase the operating budgets of the existing committees (Call for Action 43). \$719,000 of this amount has not been distributed. Several of these initiatives, which were mostly already funded even before the announcement of the *J'ai espoir* envelope, are now waiting for confirmation of their annual funding and faced with great financial precariousness. Indeed, as of July 14, 2025, only the communities and organizations that signed a two-year agreement in 2024-2025 have funding known and allocated for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Eight Indigenous communities or organizations are waiting for confirmation of their 2025-2026 funding, not having signed a two-year agreement in 2024. These communities must offer services nonetheless; some have commitments with the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions for the management of certain files, and they continue to operate without knowing if the MJQ funding will follow. However, one of these justice committees had to interrupt its activities, due to a lack of available funds to compensate its coordinator. Lack of funding also had other consequences. Two Indigenous communities and two Indigenous organizations were denied funding for 2025-2026. One of these communities wanted to set up its own justice committee, but the MJQ refused to provide funding.

- Funding of the urban Indigenous health clinics remains uncertain, which threatens the sustainability of the specialized care and support offered to the Indigenous populations living in urban settings. The discontinuation or weakening of these measures gives reason to anticipate a concerning step backwards, which could jeopardize the progress achieved in response to the specific needs of the First Nations and Inuit in the delivery of healthcare and social services (Calls for Action 96 and 97 on services inspired by Clinique Minowé model in urban settings).
- Moreover, the expiration of the MSSS's Overall Implementation Plan of the Cultural Safety Approach and the associated funding jeopardizes the continuity of services offered by the Indigenous liaison officers and the Indigenous navigators in institutions (Call for Action 19 on liaison officers). According to the information collected, this budget cut risks weakening user support and reducing their access to services adapted to their cultural realities. In addition, as mentioned previously, it constitutes a **major inconsistency with the recent adoption of the Cultural Safety Act**.

Cultural safety is neither a passing trend nor a mere symbolic gesture. The public services have the responsibility to implement it, preserve the gains and continue improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the foregoing, the Protecteur du citoyen recommends:

R-1 That the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, in close collaboration with the First Nations and Inuit representatives and Santé Québec, provide, in the mandate of the National Committee on Cultural Safety, for the adoption of a detailed multi-year plan for implementation of the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*. This planning imperatively must recognize and affirm the leadership role of the First Nations and Inuit in all the initiatives and services pertaining to their realities. In particular, it must provide for:

- a. Co-definition with the First Nations and Inuit of indicators and conditions of assessment of cultural safety initiatives;
- b. Renewal and perpetuation of the funding allowing the deployment and continuity of cultural safety initiatives in the Indigenous health clinics in urban settings and in the network's institutions;
- c. Assessment, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, of the impacts of First Nations and Inuit users supporting positions in the institutions of Santé Québec and, depending on the results obtained, the tenure, enhancement and perpetuation of these positions or the adjustment of the roles assigned to them;
- d. Deployment of strengthened mechanisms for alignment and collaboration in the continuum of services between the communities, the institutions and Santé Québec and the urban clinics, accounting for Indigenous knowledge, practices and priorities;
- e. The obligation for all employees and managers of Santé Québec institutions, whether or not they are in direct contact with First Nations and Inuit, to take and successfully complete standardized training on cultural safety within prescribed periods;
- f. Regular update of the content, teaching approaches and assessment of the impacts of the training aiming to ensure the cultural safety of First Nations and Inuit in public services, under the active supervision of the First Nations and Inuit.

R-2 That the Gouvernement du Québec, in co-construction with the First Nations and Inuit representatives, establish a government strategy on cultural safety. Each government department and agency would be responsible for deploying the means to implement the approach in all the services offered to the First Nations and Inuit. This strategy should apply in priority to the following sectors: public security (MSP), justice (MJQ) and education and higher education (MEQ and MES).

Until then, given that the needs remain, that the Gouvernement du Québec, as soon as possible, renew the funding of the cultural safety initiatives with proven results, particularly by the following measures:

- a. Perpetuate the funding of the courtworker positions and other support workers who offer Indigenous people support in the justice system.
- b. Ensure the continued funding of the justice committees, community justice programs and alternative measures already in place in the First Nations and Inuit communities, while financially supporting the new initiatives that certain communities wish to adopt.
- c. Continue the translation into English of the training at the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ).
- d. Provide for the continuation of training on Indigenous realities for the CSOs and unit managers currently in positions in detention facilities.



3 RESPECT FOR THE LINGUISTIC RIGHTS OF THE FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

As the *Protecteur du citoyen* explained in the first follow-up report, in making changes to the *Charter of the French Language* by the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, the government missed an opportunity to respond to the concerns of the First Nations and Inuit concerning their access to public services and protection of Indigenous languages. Moreover, these changes do not allow a contribution to the implementation of Calls for Action 12 to 18, which concern language (see the list of calls for action in Appendix 3).

The amended *Charter of the French Language* (CFL) and the related regulations nonetheless provide for exceptions that provide some flexibility regarding compliance with the duty of exemplarity of the agencies of the civil administration in the use of the French language with First Nations members and Inuit:

- The agencies of the civil administration (including those of the HSSN) may derogate from the obligation to use French exclusively, orally and in writing, where health, public safety or the principles of natural justice so require; (CFL, s. 22.3, para. 1 (1)).
- The agencies of the civil administration may use, in addition to French, another language in their written documents providing services to bodies referred to in section 95 of the Act or to Indigenous peoples (CFL, s. 22.3, para. 1 (2) (b)).
- A professional order may issue a permit to a person who does not fulfil the conditions relating to the knowledge of French referred to in section 35 of the *Charter of the French Language* on two conditions. First, if this person is Indigenous within the meaning of the *Indian Act* or of an agreement made between an Indigenous nation and the Gouvernement du Québec. Second, if the person will practice their profession exclusively on a reserve or on Category I or I-N lands (*Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the Charter of the French Language*, s. 1).

The information collected from the government departments, agencies and Indigenous representatives made it possible to identify many blind spots regarding the scope, form and concrete application of the exceptions. Thus, although these provisions allow some flexibility in the application of the language obligations, the *Protecteur du citoyen* finds that, in general, they remain insufficient to mitigate significantly the language barriers identified in the CERP Report. These barriers continue to compromise equitable access to quality public services for First Nations and Inuit.

- The exception related to health, safety or the principles of natural justice (CFL, s. 22.3, para. 1 (1)) is insufficiently defined and is the subject of unequal application by the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF).

The OQLF plays a role assisting agencies of the civil administration to ensure their compliance with the *Charter of the French Language*. It was brought to the attention of the *Protecteur du citoyen* that certain information disseminated by the OQLF does not clearly state the situations where these agencies may resort to a language other than French in complete legality in their oral and written communications.

EXAMPLE:

The Centre régional de santé et de services sociaux de la Baie-James (CRSSS) mentions that the interpretation of the instructions allowing signage in a language other than French when health and safety so require varies from one region to another. In her region, an OQLF advisor apparently indicated that “signage in a language other than French was authorized only when there was a question of infection prevention and safety instructions in case of imminent danger.”

- The exception for written communication for agencies of the civil administration (CFL, s. 22.3, para. 1 (2) (b)) does not extend to bilingual or trilingual signage (Call for Action 15) in public places, except in certain specific contexts.

This exclusion creates barriers to access to information and understanding of the services by First Nations and Inuit users. Several health and social services institutions reported concerns in this sense.

EXAMPLE:

CiSSS de la Montérégie-Ouest faces challenges related to the restrictions on English-language signage in non-designated institutions, particularly in Hôpital Anna-Laberge, which must provide services to the Anglophone community of Kahnawake.

- **The exception of the *Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the Charter of the French Language* (Call for Action 12) does not consider the mobility and the urban realities of some First Nations and Inuit workers, as well as the issues of overpopulation and availability of housing in the communities.**

Section 35 of the *Charter of the French Language* imposes an appropriate knowledge of French to obtain a permit from a professional order. A regulation authorizes a departure from this section in the case of a person who resides or has resided on a reserve, in a settlement in which an indigenous community lives or on Category I and Category I-N lands within the meaning of the *Act respecting the land regime in the James Bay and New Québec territories*. The person must declare this information under oath and may work only on a reserve, in a settlement in which a indigenous community lives or on Category I and Category I-N lands.

EXAMPLE:

First Nations midwives ensure culturally adapted support in their community. However, during the transfer of a patient to a hospital located outside this community, they are not legally authorized to continue this support, their right to practice being limited to their community's territory. This restriction compromises the continuity and cultural safety of care.

- **The strict interpretation of the duty of exemplarity relating to the use of the French language, as it is defined in the *Charter of the French Language*, compromises respect for the linguistic rights of the First Nations and Inuit (Calls for Action 14 and 74).**

Certain members of the personnel working for agencies of the civil administration strictly apply the duty of exemplarity in their interactions with First Nations members and Inuit, without being adequately informed of the exceptions or trained in their implementation. This lack of knowledge contributes to perpetuating practices that may compromise respect for the fundamental rights of the First Nations and Inuit and the quality of the services that are offered to them.

EXAMPLE:

Some government representatives and court officials allegedly refused to speak English or to allow the presence of an interpreter in meetings with First Nations or Inuit representatives, despite the exceptions specified by the *Charter of the French Language*.

- **A lack of knowledge and clear guidelines for respect of the linguistic rights of the First Nations and Inuit interferes in the application of the directives (Call for Action 18).**

Certain residential facilities formulate living and safety rules without specifying explicit guidelines that can guarantee respect for the users' linguistic rights. This lack of clarity, combined with some professionals' lack of knowledge of linguistic rights, may lead to discriminatory behaviours where First Nations members and Inuit are reprimanded or penalized for the use of their language in their everyday life.

EXAMPLE:

Indigenous youths housed in rehabilitation centres for youth with difficulties (in Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Drummondville) allegedly continue to receive instructions forbidding them to speak their Indigenous mother tongue with other youths in the facility. In addition, some inmates allegedly fear making a complaint when their right to speak their language during their incarceration is not respected. These examples show the importance of this issue. As it mentioned in its first follow-up report, the *Protecteur du citoyen* reiterates that these prohibitions are unacceptable and considers that corrections must be made as soon as possible.

- **The resources to meet the needs for translation and interpretation into Indigenous languages and English are insufficient to apply the exceptions named above (Call for Action 13 and 14).**

Québec State personnel are not required to speak English in their duties and do not always have access to English or Indigenous language interpreters to assist them during delivery of services to the First Nations and Inuit.

EXAMPLES:

- In the Amos and Saint-Jérôme detention facilities, reserved sectors group the Inuit detainees and accused to meet their needs better. Due to a lack of professional interpreters in Inuktitut, the correctional officers solicit other Inuit detainees to translate, including during health assessments. This practice compromises the inmates' right to confidentiality and raises security issues. Indeed, in contexts where accuracy of information is essential to guarantee management that is adequate, secure and respectful, the facility's professionals have no way to ensure the reliability of the information conveyed in either direction.
- First Nations and Inuit parents and children who appear in the Youth Division do not always have access to bilingual lawyers or interpretation services, especially in remote regions. This lack of resources compromises their right to full and complete legal assistance.

- **The end of the *J'ai espoir* initiative jeopardizes the funding of interpretation and translation.**

The Ministère de la Justice has not yet spent the \$5.5 million of *J'ai espoir*, allocated for hiring interpreters in Indigenous languages. This mandate is particularly complex, according to the MJQ. No contract has been signed to date, despite current approaches with certain Indigenous partners. However, access to justice in the Indigenous languages remains a crucial issue. The Protecteur du citoyen insists on the importance of guaranteeing long-term funding and simplifying the agreement signing processes in view of enabling the Indigenous organizations to participate fully in this essential initiative.

The Protecteur du citoyen points out that certain detention facilities under the Ministère de la Sécurité publique have nonetheless been able to offer translation services thanks to funding from the *J'ai espoir* initiative. However, this funding ended on March 31, 2025.

EXAMPLES:

- ENPQ: Two translators are dedicated to the ENPQ, but the funding is not sustainable. Moreover, only 25% of the training is translated into English, which remains insufficient to meet the needs of Indigenous police forces, as formulated in Call for Action 30.
- SQ, BEI and Police Ethics Commissioner: Several forms and intervention tools of the SQ, the BEI and the Police Ethics Commissioner have been translated into Indigenous languages, as requested in Call for Action 16, but the continuation of translations after 2025 remains uncertain, based on the information obtained in the questionnaires.

- **The Indigenous resources in interpretation and translation are insufficiently recognized (Calls for Action 13 and 14).**

There is no formal recognition of the language skills of First Nations and Inuit workers. There still is no centralized bank of interpreters and translators employed by the government. Moreover, Section 35 of the *Charter of the French Language* has not been amended to exempt Indigenous-language interpreters and translators from the requirements regarding knowledge of French. Yet this service is essential for adequate application of the exceptions specified by the *Charter of the French Language*.

EXAMPLE:

The support workers of Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec (NPJSQ) provide essential interpretation support to complainants to the Police Ethics Commissioner. However, their contribution is not officially recognized and is limited by the confidentiality restrictions that complicate their support. Moreover, the absence of interpretation services in health institutions puts increased pressure on the Native Friendship Centres, despite their already heavy workload. This fundamental role still has low visibility and is not recognized at its fair value.

- **The exceptions do not account for the historical and language barriers to the full and complete participation of the First Nations and Inuit in public services (Calls for Action 16 and 74).**

The government systems, documents and tools, designed exclusively in French, do not account for the fact that some First Nations and Inuit employees or applicants express themselves mainly in English or an Indigenous language. This barrier limits their ability to navigate in the systems efficiently and meet the administrative requirements (Call for Action 16).

EXAMPLE:

The Plateforme intégration jeunesse (PIJ), the youth integration platform used in youth protection, is exclusively in French, which considerably hinders the efficiency of Indigenous employees. Likewise, the documents required for grant applications are only in French, increasing the delays and risks of errors (Call for Action 16). This language barrier adds even more complexity to the recruitment of Inuit personnel and members of the Anglophone First Nations, in a context where it is nonetheless essential to strengthen their presence in these services.

Despite the constraints, initiatives for respect of linguistic rights

Some institutions have chosen to offer language services themselves and have found innovative solutions moving in the direction of respect for the linguistic rights of the First Nations and Inuit:

- CIUSSS de la Mauricie-et-du-Centre-du-Québec: Opening of positions as management advisors in cultural safety and support workers/interpreters, after an agreement with the union, in view of supporting the Atikamekw and Abenaki/W8banaki communities.
- CRSSSBJ and Cree Board of Health and Social Services: Agreement to offer a virtual interpretation service at all their facilities, 24/7.

- CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal: Adoption of the Voyce remote translation service for the front-line teams.
- CIUSSS du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean: Use of QR codes for signage in Indigenous languages, facilitating access to translations while complying with the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language*.

The ability to understand and communicate in a language with full proficiency is a fundamental factor in the cultural safety experience in accessing and using public services. In Section 1 of the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*, adopted on December 5, 2024, the government undertook to develop “an approach that consists of implementing a set of practices which aim to ensure that First Nations and Inuit peoples have equitable access, without any discrimination, to health care and social services”. In this same section, the government affirms that such an approach “implies taking into account their cultural, linguistic and historical realities in the organization of care and services and in all interactions with them”.

The blind spots and the examples presented above show that **the exceptions specified for First Nations and Inuit citizens in the *Charter of the French Language* and the regulations arising from it are insufficient, in their current form and application, to guarantee First Nations and Inuit citizens equitable access without discrimination to public services.** Nor do they allow full consideration of the cultural, linguistic and historical realities of these populations in the organization of care and social services, or in all their interactions with public institutions, in accordance with what is specified in the Cultural Safety Act.

Given these findings, **the Protecteur du citoyen calls on the Gouvernement du Québec to show the greatest consistency in its principles, its undertakings and its legislative framework.** It urges the government to proceed, as soon as possible, with an alignment of its legislation and regulations, beyond the health and social services sector alone, in view of responding better to the linguistic rights of the First Nations and Inuit. In the meantime, the Protecteur du citoyen invites the Ministère de la Langue française to identify concrete and pragmatic solutions to remove the current barriers.

“From my perspective, we cannot profess to recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to preserve and develop their language [as outlined] in the preamble of the *Charter of the French Language* while at the same time neglecting to provide the support they need to help them navigate a public services system dominated by the French language.” (CERP Report, p. 241-242)

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the foregoing, the Protecteur du citoyen recommends:

R-3 That the Ministère de la Langue française, in collaboration with the Office québécois de la langue française, form an orientation committee, as soon as possible, on the language issues specific to the First Nations and Inuit, with the sustained collaboration of the First Nations and Inuit representatives and the Protecteur du citoyen. This committee would have a mandate to establish a structured dialogue on the application of the *Charter of the French Language* and the cultural safety approach (including the linguistic, historical and cultural rights of the First Nations and Inuit). In addition to facilitating follow-up of the calls for action concerning language, the committee will be able to address:

- a.** The development of clear guidelines to ensure respect for the rights of the First Nations and Inuit concerning their ancestral languages. This includes the establishment of a clear directive guaranteeing respect for the right of First Nations members and Inuit to speak their language in residential resources and detention facilities.
- b.** The interpretation and application of the exceptions specified in the *Charter of the French Language*, accounting for the realities of the Indigenous organizations and communities, including in urban settings.
- c.** The measures favouring hiring and retention of First Nations and Inuit personnel in public services, particularly through language tools and accommodations.
- d.** Access to essential language services, such as forms, interpretation, translation and signage, in English and Indigenous languages, in services intended for Anglophone Indigenous communities and in urban agencies providing their services to a First Nations and Inuit clientele.
- e.** Identification of blind spots linked to the application of the *Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the Charter of the French Language*, particularly related to mobility, the housing shortage and urban realities, accompanied by an analysis of the possible levers to mitigate their impacts and favour more equitable implementation.



4 SELF-DETERMINATION AND RECONCILIATION

The Final Report of the CERP posits self-determination and reconciliation as cornerstones of reversing the systemic inequalities experienced by First Nations and Inuit citizens. The Protecteur du citoyen finds that, even though public services have established certain measures and resources to integrate the principles of self-determination of Indigenous peoples and reconciliation, their scope remains limited. While examples in various fields attest to a certain willingness to align with these principles, their deployment encounters a reluctance to change practices in depth. In many cases, the Protecteur du citoyen finds major gaps, concerning setbacks and fragmented implementation, showing that real integration of these principles still has to be consolidated. Examples are presented here in several fields, some reiterating measures implemented in respect for the principles, while others represent challenges and concerning setbacks.

Implemented measures

Youth protection

Following the Supreme Court judgment regarding the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (also known as C-92) in February 2024,¹⁴ the MSSS undertook to collaborate in good faith and to enter into agreements with the communities that so wished, providing for funding, in respect for the needs they identified.

EXAMPLES:

- Discussions in progress with Opitciwan and Uashat mak Mani-Utenam to sign tripartite coordination agreements (First Nations community, federal government and provincial government) under C-92.
- Collaboration with the SRPNI, the Makivvik Corporation, Nunavimmi Ilagiit papatauvinga¹⁵ and the MJQ in a technical group for sound development of management of youth and children's services by and for the Inuit.
- Support for Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay in its approach to adapt its services.

Moreover, the MSSS created a structure dedicated to the C-92 coordination agreements and steered by the Direction des relations et des partenariats Premières Nations et Inuit. This structure is still in the initial phase. The Indigenous authorities had been waiting for such involvement for several years, because C-92 has been applicable since it came into force on January 1, 2020. Plenty of work remains to ensure fluid transitions to self-determination in youth protection. For example, the Attorney General of Québec is challenging decisions of the Youth Division for Opitciwan children and youth who currently reside in urban settings, because the decisions are based on the law of the community: the *Loi de la Protection Sociale Atikamekw d'Opitciwan* (LPSAO).¹⁶

It should be noted that the major progress is mainly related to C-92. However, the DYP and the Indigenous representatives expressed doubts about the functioning of renewal or signing new agreements for exemption from responsibilities under the *Youth Protection Act* (YPA). Issues are noted regarding the fluidity of the M-30 agreement process and the funding process.

Police forces

In 2024-2025, the government announced an investment of \$300 million to stabilize and strengthen Indigenous police forces (IPF) by 2028-2029 (Call for Action 32 on the budgetary envelope for upgrading Indigenous police force wages, infrastructure and equipment). According to the QAFNIPD, this initiative is a recognition signal. Moreover, the 2025-2026 budget provides for \$7 million over five years to consolidate mixed psychosocial intervention and community policing practices (Call for Action 37 on mixed intervention patrols). The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) salutes this undertaking as a first step.¹⁷ In addition, in October 2024, the government launched the *Programme de soutien aux pratiques policières concertées en itinérance et en santé mentale* to help the IPFs adapt their interventions to the needs of people who are homeless or have mental health issues. According to the AFNQL and the QAFNIPD, given that the IPFs have been underfunded and excluded from the structures that govern Québec's other police forces, these additional amounts will not be sufficient to meet the real needs and fill the gaps accumulated over decades with other police forces. In particular, it is necessary to account for extra costs related to basic training, compulsory upgrades and, in some cases, pension fund enhancement. The costs for all police forces also increased in a similar manner over the past few years. Instead of really catching up, this envelope risks creating new financial pressures for the IPFs without correcting the existing dispa-

14 Supreme Court of Canada, *Reference re An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, 2024 SCC 5.

15 Nunavimmi Ilagiit papatauvinga aims to build integrated family services, based on Inuit knowledge and methods, so that the *Youth Protection Act* is used as a law of exception.

16 *Loi de la Protection Sociale Atikamekw d'Opitciwan* (LPSAO), chapitre 2, art. 4 : "This law applies to the children who are members of the Atikamekw community of Opitciwan. It also applies to the children who are members of the Atikamekw community of Opitciwan but living outside it."

17 ICI Radio-Canada.ca, "Le financement des corps policiers autochtones doit être une priorité, selon l'AFNQL", Raphaëlle Laverdière, April 5, 2024.

rities recognized by the CERP and the courts.¹⁸ Finally, uncertainty remains regarding the real impact of these funds and their capacity to guarantee sustainable improvements.

According to the MSP, tripartite agreements will be submitted soon to the Cabinet between certain IPFs, the Gouvernement du Québec and the federal government. However, according to the QAFNIPD, although the discussions have been positive, the Association regrets its exclusion from the negotiations, which limits its ability to support its members. Moreover, according to the AFNQL, some communities have denounced the fact that Québec's approach in the negotiation had not changed despite the Supreme Court of Canada decision rendered in November 2024.¹⁹ Still according to the AFNQL, communities have mentioned that, despite the funding increase, the approach used by the Gouvernement du Québec still would be marked by a lack of transparency, a refusal to provide comparables, and the threat of losing the funding offered in the absence of a quick agreement signing.

Health and social services

According to the information collected by the Protecteur du citoyen, the MSSS is collaborating with Indigenous Services Canada and the SRPNI for the deployment of the health and wellness governance model of the First Nations in Québec. These collaborations are consistent with the purpose of Calls for Action 80, 82, 83, 89, 91, 95 and 98 (demanding tripartite negotiations between the Gouvernement du Québec, the federal government, and the Indigenous authorities and in some cases, service corridors), namely to improve access to health-care and social services for First Nations citizens and for the entire continuum of care. This model was adopted during an AFNQL Assembly of Chiefs in March 2025. The resolution entrusts the FNQLHSSC with the mandate to prepare the transition with the communities, in respect for their autonomy, and to jointly develop an integrated planning approach for health and wellness services in view of the transformation.

An increased openness and availability of the MSSS have been reported, particularly in the assessment of the model's feasibility and in the efforts to improve relations with the institutions of the health and social services network. This collaboration notably materialized during a tour of the institutions of the Québec health and social services network. The tour aimed to delineate the needs related to the deployment of the future authority that will be dedicated to First Nations health and wellness. Now, in the opinion of the First Nations representatives, increased proactivity is expected from the MSSS, both in assessing the effects and implementing the new health and wellness governance model. Some adjustments appear necessary to ensure efficient implementation of the model.

Justice services

In the past few years, the MJQ has signed some agreements to develop community justice programs and alternative measures for Indigenous adults, mainly in urban settings (Calls for Action 42 and 43), particularly with the following agencies:

- Centre de services Mamik Lac-Saint-Jean and Justice Canada: Three-year tripartite agreement for non-judicialization and support of Indigenous litigants.
- First Peoples Justice Centre of Tiohtià:ke / Montréal and Justice Canada: Two-year agreement for the deployment of the General Alternative Measures Program – Indigenous people in an urban setting (PMRG-AMU) in Montréal.
- Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre: Monitoring and support of participants in the Programme d'accompagnement justice et santé mentale + (PAJ-SM+).
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières: Deployment of the PMRG-AMU.
- Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ): Deployment of justice services, including a directory of resources in domestic and family violence, a legal glossary, a learning circle for support workers, and a national event to plan a new strategy on Indigenous urban justice (2024-2027).

Moreover, the continuation of Gladue report writing activities (Calls for Action 51 to 55) contributes to progress in the fight against systemic discrimination and against overrepresentation of First Nations and Inuit in the prison system. In view of supporting development and perpetuating the expertise of Gladue report writers (Calls for Action 51 to 55), the MJQ has allowed some organizations to employ them full-time instead of on a contract basis.

However, despite the increase in the number of requests, the increase in remuneration and the openness of the judiciary to ordering these reports, the budget allocated for the 2023-2025 fiscal years remains fixed at \$175,000. The MJQ observes a high turnover of writers, whether they are employed or on contract, but considers that their number is sufficient to meet the demand. Moreover, several persistent difficulties within the court office hinder the efficient production of Gladue reports: administrative delays in the transmission of orders, incomplete requests, and staff turnover. On the other hand, the writers encounter difficulties in organizing trips to remote regions. The complexity of contacting offenders or defence lawyers also affects processing of requests.

¹⁸ *Quebec (Attorney General) v. Pekuamiunuatsh Takuhikan*, 2024 SCC 39.

¹⁹ *Idem*.

Higher education

The MES established a program, for 2024-2025, which aims to “support CEGEP efforts in the implementation of measures facilitating the college education, perseverance and success of Indigenous students”.²⁰ This program is perceived by some Indigenous representatives as a relevant and essential initiative to meet the specific needs of Indigenous college students.

Social housing in urban areas

The housing crisis affects all Indigenous nations and was identified by the CERP as “the epicentre of many of the problems faced by the First Nations and Inuit”.²¹ In response to this issue, several social housing projects in urban areas have been developed or are currently under construction since 2023. These projects are supported by various government grants and are developed in collaboration with the Société immobilière du Regroupement des centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec (SIRCAAQ). These initiatives are within the framework of the Québec Affordable Housing Program (PHAQ) and the former program known as AccèsLogis Québec. They offer housing for students, families and Indigenous people in need in several Québec municipalities (Saint-Charles-Borromée, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières, Roberval, Val-d’Or, Québec). A community project for Indigenous students and their families is also scheduled in Chibougamau. These social housing initiatives foster better living conditions and support the academic perseverance of Indigenous people in urban settings. They also are integrated with the implementation of Calls for Action 10 and 11, which specifically target these issues.

Nonetheless, although the SIRCAAQ acknowledges the PHAQ’s contribution in the current development of one of its major projects, namely the biggest affordable housing project built in Québec, it identifies some pitfalls. In particular, it reports that it has been obstructed by the exclusion of community services and spaces from funding of the living environments, even though they are essential to the cultural safety of Indigenous individuals and families. To fill these gaps, it must multiply the approaches to several funding sources, which complicates and slows down the projects. For example, the Québec-UL project had to be funded by more than seven different sources, each with their own special and sometimes contradictory requirements. Moreover, administrative constraints, such as the M-30 agreements represent a major pitfall in the diligent development of projects, which cannot afford delays of several months, and even several years.

Challenges and Concerning Setbacks

Educational success of Indigenous students

According to the Vérificateur général du Québec’s report²² published in November 2024, despite the long-established finding of a success gap for Indigenous students, the Ministère de l’Éducation (MEQ) has put few measures in place to improve the educational success of Indigenous students. Support remains insufficient, particularly during transfers to the Québec school system, and the school environment scarcely offers a culturally adapted and safe environment. In addition, the funds earmarked for educational success do not account for regional realities and do not allow sustainable actions.

In December 2024, the Gouvernement du Québec suspended Budget Measure 15061 “Educational success of Indigenous students and reconciliation”, stifling the efforts related to Call for Action 11, which aims to make the educational success of Indigenous students a priority. These amounts would enable schools and school service centres to offer services essential to the educational success of Indigenous students: cultural support, psychosocial assistance, and adapted educational interventions.

Although the MEQ announced the renewal of Measure 15061 to the First Nations Education Council in the context of an investment of over \$540 million in education, several grey areas persist. Indeed, the specific financial resources associated with this measure are not confirmed, whereas the suspension of the measure in December 2024 had been attributed to demand exceeding the available resources. Furthermore, the payment schedule of the amounts remains unknown, compromising a culturally safe return to school for many Indigenous youth. Finally, additional constraints could be associated with use of the funds, which raises concerns as to the flexibility and efficiency of their deployment.

Moreover, the funds of the *J’ai espoir* initiative, earmarked to support Indigenous students in the Québec system and the inclusion of Indigenous course content, have not been renewed. Although other budget announcements have been made to mitigate the end of this funding, the total funding allocated to educational perseverance has been reduced by half for the years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 (see the table below). **The Protecteur du citoyen is concerned about the decrease in the funds enabling a response to Call for Action 11 and insists on the necessity to increase funding to ensure Indigenous educational perseverance remains a priority.**

20 Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l’Enseignement supérieur, *Guide d’attribution des subventions 2024-2025 – Programme accueil et intégration des Autochtones au collégial*, March 2024.

21 CERP, *Final Report*, 2019, p. 221.

22 Vérificateur général du Québec, *Rapport du Vérificateur général du Québec à l’Assemblée nationale pour l’année 2024-2025*, November 2024.

FUNDING SOURCE	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
<i>J'ai espoir</i> Initiative	\$7,863,000	\$0	\$0
2022-2027 Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Wellness of the First Nations and Inuit	\$1,000,000	\$3,904,000	\$4,000,000
Total	\$8,863,000	\$3,904,000	\$4,000,000

Finally, in January 2025, the MEQ suspended the work of the Round Table on the Educational Success of First Nations Students, as well as its subcommittees, due to the application for judicial review filed by the AFNQL and the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) against the Attorney General of Québec.²³ This suspension, in addition to harming relations and considerably reducing the opportunities for exchange of information, slowed the work aimed at accounting for Indigenous demands. It also risks compromising the quality, continuity and relevance of the programs and services intended for Indigenous students. The Round Table, which includes more than twenty organizations, is the only consensus forum enabling the Minister of Education to have direct access to the opinions, advice and field realities of Indigenous environments. The Round Table has a mandate to propose solutions adapted to the specific needs of these students. The announcement of the resumption of the Round Table's work, at the request of 13 organizations of the provincial school system and the Indigenous communities, was made on August 18, 2025. While positively welcoming this news, the Protecteur du citoyen nonetheless insists on the necessity of mitigating the effects of the application for judicial review on the relations and collaboration with the Indigenous partners, and of pursuing the negotiations in good faith. This is necessary to preserve the quality and continuity of the services offered to the First Nations and Inuit.

Training of aspiring Indigenous police officers

Training of Indigenous police officers remains a major issue. The end of funding of training expenses for aspiring police officers (Call for Action 29) in the Initial Indigenous police-patrol training program (Programme de formation initiale en patrouille-gendarmerie) raises concerns for the QAFNIPD and the FNEC, among others. This funding came from the measure facilitating access for Indigenous police force recruits (*Accroître l'accessibilité des aspirants policiers embauchés par les corps de police autochtones*) and a grant from the *J'ai espoir* initiative.

The ENPQ would like the funding granted to be perpetuated beyond March 2025, to facilitate access to the Initial Indigenous patrol-officer training program, ensure the continuity of training, and avoid any interruption in the services offered to the IPFs and their aspiring police officers. From now on, the MSP has decided instead to integrate amounts for this training representing 2% of total payroll, into the IPF tripartite agreements. However, these amounts may be spent according to the needs determined by the IPFs, with no obligation to reserve them for initial training. According to the QAFNIPD, it is imperative for Call for Action 29 to remain a priority to ensure adequate support for Indigenous police forces. The Protecteur du citoyen also believes it is necessary to perpetuate, beyond March 2025, the funding of training expenses for aspiring Indigenous police officers under the Initial Indigenous police-patrol training program.

Justice

The abolition of the Direction des affaires autochtones within the MJQ gives rise to concerns regarding the commitment of the MJQ and the government to recognize and support the legal realities specific to the First Nations and Inuit. Indigenous affairs (apart from management of the Itinerant Court) henceforth are under the responsibility of the Direction du soutien aux partenariats et aux programmes. Based on the information obtained, this change is perceived as an illustration that First Nations members and Inuit are citizens like any other, and not belonging to peoples with distinct rights, including in matters of justice.

Added to this internal reorganization of the MJQ is the uncertainty regarding continued funding of the courtworker positions and the community justice initiatives (as was mentioned previously), as well as the refusal to fund new justice committees. For the Protecteur du citoyen, the MJQ's action illustrates a setback in Indigenous access to justice. Tensions also persist in the relations between the MJQ and its Indigenous partners, particularly due to the lack of consultations and co-construction approaches during the development of bills impacting Indigenous populations.

Finally, the Protecteur du citoyen is worried about the consequences of certain legal disputes, such as the application for judicial review in education, for the collaboration and partnerships the MJQ maintains with the First Nations and Inuit representatives and, by extension, for the services offered to the clientele. Furthermore, during the challenge to the federal legislation C-92, the MJQ set the guideline for its counterparts to adhere to the status quo, despite the Act coming into force. This guideline impacted the quality of collaborations and the services to children, youth and families. These effects continue

²³ The AFNQL and the FNEC filed for judicial review against the Attorney General of Québec to challenge certain sections of the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec* (Bill 96). They maintain that this Act infringes the rights to self-determination and self-government in education, and the rights related to usage of heritage languages. The application for judicial review concern 14 sections of the *Charter of the French Language*.

to be felt, particularly due to the gaps in the training offered in youth protection on the minimum standards specified in the federal Act, which is prejudicial to First Nations and Inuit families and children. Nonetheless, the MSSS plans to offer training in the network's institutions on the minimum standards of the federal legislation C-92 in fall 2025 and winter 2026, which constitute a relevant step to strengthen the implementation of the Act in respect for the rights of Indigenous children.

The Protecteur du citoyen wishes to emphasize that it shares the concerns expressed by the persons consulted regarding what they perceive as a notable setback in the commitment of the Ministère de la Justice du Québec to Indigenous justice and recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Agreements under the Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif (M-30)

The process for approval of agreements under the *Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif* (M-30)²⁴ has the objective of ensuring the coordination and consistency of any intergovernmental agreement made with an Indigenous organization, community or nation. It requires that any agreement be approved by the government and signed both by the Minister responsible for Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit and by the Minister of the sector concerned, even for agreements involving moderate financial undertakings. Coordination of government actions in Indigenous affairs is essential to ensure the consistency and efficiency of the interventions. However, this process presents challenges and major irritants for several government departments and Indigenous organizations consulted. The significant delays and the heavy administrative burden this process generates, particularly in the last few years, compromise the fluidity of collaborations and slow down the implementation of projects that were considered priorities.

EXAMPLES:

- The Ministère de l'Éducation is lagging behind in granting financial support to Indigenous organizations.
- The SIRCAAQ deplores that the delays in obtaining M-30 agreements compromise the rapid development of projects.

- In 2017, the FNQLHSSC had obtained an M-30 agreement within about two months, allowing it to access data necessary to conduct a study on judicialization of the First Nations. However, a similar request submitted in 2023 in view of updating this study had not resulted in a finalized agreement as of 2025.
- Indigenous organizations working in youth protection withdrew or abstained from beginning a renewal process for M-30 agreements under sections 131.23 and 131.25 of the YPA because of the heavy administrative burden, excessive documentary requirements, and delays caused by disagreements around the terminology used.

These concerning examples call for the need to find a better balance between the necessary intergovernmental coordination and the flexibility required to respond efficiently to the needs. **The Protecteur du citoyen asks the various government departments to undertake in good faith to remove the obstacles to the signing of M-30 agreements, particularly with the aim of respecting the right to self-determination and improving cultural safety in the offering of public services for the First Nations and Inuit.**

Emergency Medical Transportation

According to the information collected concerning emergency medical transportation services, the new MSSS action plan for the emergency pre-hospital system (*Plan d'action gouvernemental du système préhospitalier d'urgence 2023-2028*)²⁵ includes three measures²⁶ in a project aimed specifically for First Nations and Inuit communities. However, it does not provide for an increase in the service offering for all communities, as requested by Call for Action 77 (on emergency medical transportation services). The proposed self-funded measures aim at training and improving cultural sensitivity within existing services. An amount of \$1.75 million will be earmarked to offer a community health communications centre to the communities of Nunavik and James Bay.

The Protecteur du citoyen considers that the MSSS must dedicate additional efforts to substantial improvement of access to emergency medical transportation services by land and air. The efforts must include the First Nations and Inuit representatives in the planning and delivery of the services and induce Santé Québec to establish local partnerships.

²⁴ *Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif*, s. 3.48.

²⁵ Gouvernement du Québec, *Pour des services et des soins adaptés à travers une gouvernance renouvelée : Plan d'action gouvernemental du système préhospitalier d'urgence 2023-2028*, 2024.

²⁶ The three measures are: adapt the First Responders program to First Nations and Inuit communities; adapt pre-hospital interventions to the diverse realities of First Nations and Inuit communities; render a health communications centre (HCC) accessible for Nunavik and James Bay.

Workforce Delivering Healthcare and Social Services in Nunavik

Call for Action 107²⁷ requests implementation of the proposals for improvement put forward by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) with the aim of reducing the inequities between Inuit and non-Inuit working conditions. Let us remember that a committee on the working conditions of the Inuit workforce was formed over 10 years ago. It is composed of the NRBHSS, the MSSS and the Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux (CPNSSS). One of this committee's objectives was to update the recognition of Inuit language and cultural skills, in view of increasing the presence of Inuit personnel and cultural safety in the health and social services institutions in Nunavik. According to the information collected, no notable progress can be reported on this subject.²⁸ However, in the Makivvik Corporation's opinion, during the development of the *Act respecting the governance of the health and social services system* (AGHSSS), the Gouvernement du Québec missed an opportunity to address the inequities between the Inuit and non-Inuit workforce.²⁹ Moreover, the exclusion of Nunavik institutions under the authority of Santé Québec, the sole employer of the HSSN, risks worsening the situation. Indeed, while the employees' seniority will be maintained to ensure inter-institutional mobility of the workforce under Santé Québec, no provision was specified to ensure the maintenance of workforce mobility to Nunavik. All things considered, the decision to exclude the northern territories from the application of the AGHSSS does not seem to have sufficiently considered its potential for exacerbation of the persistent labour shortage in all healthcare and social services in Nunavik, and its impacts on the recruitment and retention of personnel, including Inuit personnel.

The Protecteur du citoyen considers that the necessary efforts to rectify the situation must be deployed as soon as possible. **It recalls the importance of including the NRBHSS and the authorities of the northern institutions in all work aimed at 1) improving the mobility of HSSN personnel in Nunavik and 2) making the working conditions equitable for the Inuit, in accordance with the purpose of Call for Action 107.**

²⁷ Follow up as quickly as possible on the proposals for improvement of working conditions put forward by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

²⁸ Considering the persistent impacts of these issues on the capacity of the Nunavik institutions to offer culturally safe services and care, the Protecteur du citoyen, in April 2025, launched a special inquiry targeting the Inuit labour shortage in child and family services, with the collaboration of the local authorities.

²⁹ Makivvik Corporation, *Mémoire sur le projet de loi 15 – Loi visant à rendre le système de santé et de services sociaux plus efficace*, May 23, 2023, p. 10.



5 OVERALL ISSUES: WHERE ARE WE?

A long way from an overall strategic implementation and coordinated action

Since the first follow-up report in 2023, several authorities have reported on interesting and promising initiatives and projects. Nonetheless, in the opinion of the Protecteur du citoyen, the assessment of the actions undertaken since the publication of its first report exposes the persistent absence of an overall strategy for implementation of the cross-disciplinary calls for action and the lack of leadership to promote such a strategy within the Government du Québec.

With the expiration of the funding attached to the Inquiry Commissions on March 31, 2025 and in the current context of budget restrictions, the Protecteur du citoyen fears that the impetus required by the Gouvernement du Québec to adopt an overall strategy for implementation of the calls for action will never materialize.

Ethno-cultural data

The low level of progress on Call for Action 4 is particularly revealing of the lack of clarity regarding the responsibility for leadership of implementing the cross-disciplinary calls for action. This Call for Action is worded as follows: "Incorporate ethno-cultural data collection into the operation, reporting and decision-making of public sector organizations." The SRPNI indicates that no action has been accomplished since June 2023 to respond to this Call for Action. It recalls that it was not mandated to produce, gather or collect these data and does not have any financial, human or technical means to do so. Moreover, it maintains that major obstacles "prohibit the implementation of this measure for the time being".³⁰ For its part, the MSSS considers that the responsibility for this Call for Action rests with the SRPNI. Finally, several health and social services institutions affirm they are developing temporary solutions while waiting for structuring actions by the MSSS for the network as a whole. This ambiguity of each party's roles and responsibilities only slows a better understanding of the needs and hinders benefits spurred by government apparatus actions on services to the First Nations and Inuit.

Yet the need identified by the different public services is to have clear guidelines on how to collect, transmit and archive the data concerning the Indigenous population receiving these services. **The Protecteur du citoyen invites the government departments to identify the agency of the civil administration that has the expertise, credibility and overview to lead this important initiative in co-construction with the First Nations and Inuit who wish it. This first step is essential to close monitoring of the public actions with the aim of reducing access inequalities to quality public services by the First Nations and Inuit.**

Collaboration and Co-construction of Solutions with Indigenous Representatives: mixed signals

In its 2023 Report, the Protecteur du citoyen noted recurrent issues related to the quality of collaboration between government officials and Indigenous authorities or service providers. At present, the Protecteur du citoyen points out that certain public services seem to have gained in know-how. For example, in youth protection, trust relationships are established in some cases, particularly under the leadership of the Direction nationale de la protection de la jeunesse, which foreshadows the emergence of solutions co-constructed with First Nations and Inuit representatives. One good example of this is the creation of the *Guide de pratique clinique – L'intérêt des enfants autochtones, le bien-être de leurs familles et des communautés : des concepts phares en protection de la jeunesse*.³¹ This clinical practice guide was co-developed with Indigenous representatives whose work had begun following amendments made to the YPA. However, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done so that these orientations have concrete effects in the field. The observations tend to show that the application of the orientations varies according to the regions and the will of the DYP, the directors of the youth programs, the officers of the CISSS and CIUSSS, and the support workers.

Moreover, as the Protecteur du citoyen mentioned in the 2023 follow-up report, several Indigenous authorities consider that, based on their experience, the consultation processes for bills put forward by some government departments did not allow real consideration of their issues, priorities or expertise. They think these processes instead conveniently give the impression the government attaches importance to First Nations and Inuit and is fulfilling its obligations to them. For example, concerning the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*, the *Act respecting the Commissioner for Children's Well-Being and Rights*, and Bill 97, *An Act mainly to modernize the forest regime*, some of the

30 Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat des relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit, *Tableau de suivi des réponses aux appels à l'action de la Commission d'enquête sur les relations entre les Autochtones et certains services publics – Rapport d'étape*, September 2024, p. 1

31 Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Guide de pratique clinique – L'intérêt des enfants autochtones, le bien-être de leurs familles et des communautés : des concepts phares en protection de la jeunesse*, February 2025.

First Nations and Inuit authorities consulted affirm that their contributions were ignored ultimately in the bills. In their opinion, this shows a very significant gap in the understanding of what a real consultation is.

In the same vein, the Protecteur du citoyen is concerned about the quality of support and collaboration offered to the Nunavik institutions by the MSSS. As mentioned previously, the *Charter of the French Language* has had impacts, such as the refusal to communicate in English with Inuit professionals in bilateral exchanges or during meetings intended to consult the Inuit.³² In addition to these impacts, the Protecteur du citoyen has been informed of structural problems in the handling of requests from Nunavik health and social services institutions. It was reported that Nunavik organizations must devote unreasonable time to reminding the MSSS of their undertakings under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA) and subsequent agreements. The Inuit also must reiterate the importance of considering Nunavik issues regarding the cost of living, the necessity of derogating from the legislative and regulatory framework to consider local and cultural realities, specific rights, etc. This necessity to raise the awareness of the different MSSS interlocutors and reexplain Nunavik's realities to them has been – and remains – greatly exacerbated since assent to Bill 15, *An Act respecting the governance of the health and social services system* (AGHSSS), and in the wake of the restructuring and redivision of responsibilities (orientations and operations) arising from the Act coming into force.

Indeed, the new Act raises adjustment issues legally, administratively and in terms of cultural safety in the northern territories. For example, section 6 of the AGHSSS specifies that the Act does not apply to the delivery of services for Nations covered by an agreement.³³ This decision was justified publicly by a concern to “take time to respect the exercise of autonomy of the nations covered by an agreement in the context of the JBNQA and the NEQA”.³⁴ The Protecteur du citoyen points out that the Makivvik Corporation, in its brief presented at the National Assembly consultations on Bill 15, opposed that the AHSSS become, without any amendment, the legislation governing the Nunavik health system.³⁵ Yet in March 2025, the Minister of Health and Social Services finally mandated Santé Québec “to exercise regarding northern institutions³⁶ the

government departmental responsibilities that were transferred to it regarding the rest of Québec on December 1, 2024”. This decision, made unilaterally, leaves the Protecteur du citoyen perplexed. What is happening to the government's willingness to respect the right to autonomy of the Inuit, Naskapi and Cree? **In this transitional context, the Protecteur du citoyen intends to monitor closely the dynamics of collaboration among the northern institutions, the MSSS and Santé Québec.** It will ensure that the work resulting from the legislative changes guarantees the users continuity of services and access to an effective and quality complaint process (both in first and second instance), while integrating the principles and practices related to cultural safety, in respect for the autonomy of the Inuit, Cree and Naskapi.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Another revealing example of the lack of a more structuring strategy is **the absence, to date, of a reflection and collaborative work initiative in view of adopting a Québec law ensuring the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)** (Call for Action 3). The Protecteur du citoyen considers that the UNDRIP is an essential foundation that must support any initiative of reconciliation, collaboration, recognition of rights and co-construction with the First Nations and Inuit. Let us also remember that the National Assembly, in October 2019 and October 2020, adopted two motions on the necessity of agreeing on the definitions of the provisions and principles of the UNDRIP in view of developing and adopting the necessary legislative changes.³⁷ The adoption of a Québec law could pave the way for fruitful, consistent and lasting collaboration in all sectors of public services.

Conversely, a pragmatic approach aiming at specific agreements reached on a case-by-case basis cannot alone guarantee a structured and consistent recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples, particularly in self-determination, self-government, governance and territorial and linguistic rights. Although the agreements made with the different communities and nations are important, the Protecteur du citoyen points out that **the UNDRIP does not only constitute a sym-**

32 The MSSS interlocutors explain this refusal out of a concern to comply with the duty of exemplarity of the *Charter of the French Language*, although the Charter provides for an exception for oral and written communications with First Nations members and the Inuit for the public administration.

33 The AHSSS becomes the AHSSS for the Inuit and Naskapi, CQLR c. S-4.2 and no longer applies to the AHSSS for Cree Native Persons.

34 Ministre de la Santé, ministre responsable des Services sociaux et ministre déléguée à la Santé et aux Aînés, *Mémoire au Conseil des ministres – Projet de loi visant à rendre le système de santé et de services sociaux plus efficace*, March 17, 2023, p. 13.

35 Makivvik Corporation, *Mémoire sur le projet de loi 15 – Loi visant à rendre le système de santé et de services sociaux plus efficace*, May 23, 2023, p. 7.

36 Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre, Inuulitsivik Health Centre, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and CLSC Naskapi.

37 National Assembly motions: *Acknowledge the conclusions of the Viens Commission (...) and ask the Québec government to recognize the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and commit to negotiating its implementation with the First Nations and the Inuit* (4523-6, October 2019) and *Ask the Premier of Québec to reach a consensus with the Indigenous authorities as soon as possible on the definitions of the provisions and the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in order to draft and enact the necessary legislative amendments* (8813-6, October 2020).

bold undertaking, but an essential normative framework for an authentic reconciliation and for the development of public policies respectful of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

The same goes for the declarations of rights and other legal standards adopted by the different Indigenous nations in Québec. Recognizing them can ensure consistency with the principles of the UNDRIP, particularly Article 34, which provides for Indigenous peoples to “promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures [...], their juridical systems and customs”, and with the aims of Call for Action 40 of the CERP Report.

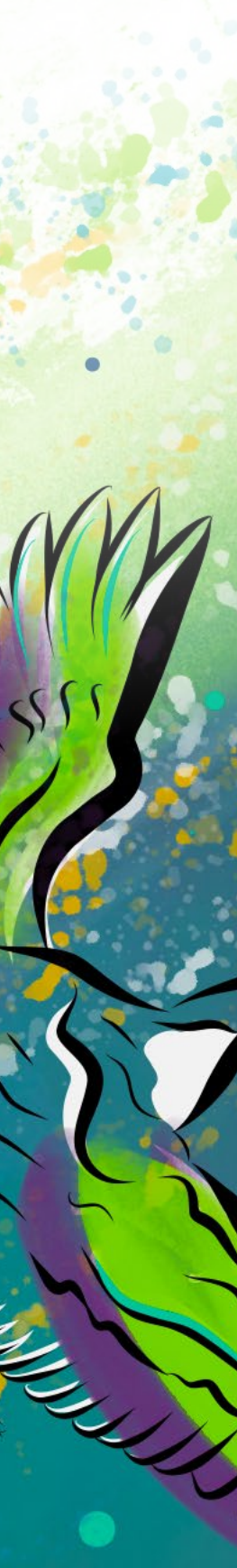
Table of rights of the UNDRIP

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION AND KEY ARTICLES
Self-determination	Right to freely determine their political status and their economic, social and cultural development (Art. 3-5)
Culture and traditions	Right to practice, revitalize and transmit their traditions, languages, ceremonies and customs (Art. 11-13)
Lands and resources	Right to possession, use, management and conservation of their traditional lands and resources (Art. 25-32)
Civil and political	Equality before the law, protection against forced relocation, right to security, life and liberty (Art. 6-10)
Economic and social	Access to health, education, housing, social security and an adequate standard of living (Art. 14)
Participation and FPIC	Right to participate in all the decisions concerning them, with free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (Art. 18 and 19)

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the foregoing, the Protecteur du citoyen recommends:

R-4 That the Gouvernement du Québec engage, in close collaboration with the First Nations and Inuit representatives, in a formal and progressive process, with the aim of elaborating an Act for implementation of the UNDRIP. This Act should allow entrenchment in the Québec legislation of the range of individual and collective rights recognized for the Indigenous peoples.



CONCLUSION

Two years after publication of its first follow-up report, the Protecteur du citoyen finds that concerning gaps remain with respect to First Nations and Inuit rights in Québec public services. The lack of leadership from the Gouvernement du Québec and the absence of an overall strategy for implementing the CERP's calls for action continue to curb the necessary progress. The tendency remains to favor ad hoc actions instead of systemic reforms, as evidenced by the absence of a common plan by Santé Québec to apply the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*.

Nonetheless, many examples presented in these pages show the growing mobilization and awareness in some environments. Thus, efforts are being made to collaborate better with the Indigenous communities, integrate the principles of cultural safety, adopt specialized human resources, and recognize First Nations and Inuit rights. The Protecteur du citoyen wishes to highlight the tangible efforts of several regional and institutional actors that have shown initiative and openness, often in complex contexts. Although often isolated, this progress proves that a paradigm shift is possible. It is essential for these initiatives to be supported and extended to Québec as a whole.

The current budget context compromises several advances, notably with the end of the *J'ai espoir* initiative and the non-renewal of multiple funding associated with it. Given the urgency, adequate and sustainable funding remains an indispensable factor in the continuous improvement of adapted and culturally safe public services. The government must ensure the sustainability of the resources and initiatives put in place.

Finally, detected blind spots regarding the application of exceptions specified in the *Charter of the French Language* collide with the linguistic rights of the First Nations and Inuit. In this sense, the legislative alignment must extend beyond the health and social services and public security sectors. The Protecteur du citoyen thus calls on the Gouvernement du Québec to ensure that the principles and the undertakings adopted in its legislative framework are applied consistently.

The issues raised show the scope of the work to be accomplished, work that must be based on formal recognition of the right to self-determination of the First Nations and Inuit. The Protecteur du citoyen formulates four recommendations and, especially, asks the Gouvernement du Québec to engage, with all the Indigenous representatives, in a formal process aiming to develop legislation for implementation of the UNDRIP. This is an essential foundation on which to base any initiative of reconciliation, collaboration, recognition of rights and co-construction with the First Nations and Inuit.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Protecteur du citoyen recommends:

R-1 That the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, in close collaboration with the First Nations and Inuit representatives and Santé Québec, provide, in the mandate of the National Committee on Cultural Safety, for the adoption of a detailed multi-year plan for implementation of the *Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*. This planning imperatively must recognize and affirm the leadership role of the First Nations and Inuit in all the initiatives and services pertaining to their realities. In particular, it must provide for:

- a. Co-definition with the First Nations and Inuit of indicators and conditions of assessment of cultural safety initiatives;
- b. Renewal and perpetuation of the funding allowing the deployment and continuity of cultural safety initiatives in the Indigenous health clinics in urban settings and in the network's institutions;
- c. Assessment, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, of the impacts of First Nations and Inuit users supporting positions in the institutions of Santé Québec and, depending on the results obtained, the tenure, enhancement and perpetuation of these positions or the adjustment of the roles assigned to them;
- d. Deployment of strengthened mechanisms for alignment and collaboration in the continuum of services between the communities, the institutions and Santé Québec and the urban clinics, accounting for Indigenous knowledge, practices and priorities;
- e. The obligation for all employees and managers of Santé Québec institutions, whether or not they are in direct contact with First Nations and Inuit, to take and successfully complete standardized training on cultural safety within prescribed periods;

- f. Regular update of the content, teaching approaches and assessment of the impacts of the training aiming to ensure the cultural safety of First Nations and Inuit in public services, under the active supervision of the First Nations and Inuit.

R-2 That the Gouvernement du Québec, in co-construction with the First Nations and Inuit representatives, establish a government strategy on cultural safety. Each government department and agency would be responsible for deploying the means to implement the approach in all the services offered to the First Nations and Inuit. This strategy should apply in priority to the following sectors: public security (MSP), justice (MJQ) and education and higher education (MEQ and MES).

Until then, given that the needs remain, that the Gouvernement du Québec, as soon as possible, renew the funding of the cultural safety initiatives with proven results, particularly by the following measures:

- a. Perpetuate the funding of the courtworker positions and other support workers who offer Indigenous people support in the justice system.
- b. Ensure the continued funding of the justice committees, community justice programs and alternative measures already in place in the First Nations and Inuit communities, while financially supporting the new initiatives that certain communities wish to adopt.
- c. Continue the translation into English of the training at the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ).
- d. Provide for the continuation of training on Indigenous realities for the CSOs and unit managers currently in positions in detention facilities.

R-3 That the Ministère de la Langue française, in collaboration with the Office québécois de la langue française, form an orientation committee, as soon as possible, on the language issues specific to the First Nations and Inuit, with the sustained collaboration of the First Nations and Inuit representatives and the Protecteur du citoyen. This committee would have a mandate to establish a structured dialogue on the application of the *Charter of the French Language* and the cultural safety approach (including the linguistic, historical and cultural rights of the First Nations and Inuit). In addition to facilitating follow-up of the calls for action concerning language, the committee will be able to address:

- a. The development of clear guidelines to ensure respect for the rights of the First Nations and Inuit concerning their ancestral languages. This includes the establishment of a clear directive guaranteeing respect for the right of First Nations members and Inuit to speak their language in residential resources and detention facilities.
- b. The interpretation and application of the exceptions specified in the *Charter of the French Language*, accounting for the realities of the Indigenous organizations and communities, including in urban settings.
- c. The measures favouring hiring and retention of First Nations and Inuit personnel in public services, particularly through language tools and accommodations.
- d. Access to essential language services, such as forms, interpretation, translation and signage, in English and Indigenous languages, in services intended for Anglophone Indigenous communities and in urban agencies providing their services to a First Nations and Inuit clientele.
- e. Identification of blind spots linked to the application of the *Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the Charter of the French Language*, particularly related to mobility, the housing shortage and urban realities, accompanied by an analysis of the possible levers to mitigate their impacts and favour more equitable implementation.

R-4 That the Gouvernement du Québec engage, in close collaboration with the First Nations and Inuit representatives, in a formal and progressive process, with the aim of elaborating an Act for implementation of the UNDRIP. This Act should allow entrenchment in the Québec legislation of the range of individual and collective rights recognized for the Indigenous peoples.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF ACTION PRIORITIES PROPOSED BY THE PROTECTEUR DU CITOYEN IN HIS FIRST FOLLOW-UP REPORT – OCTOBER 2023

Overall findings

1. Adopt an overall strategy for implementing calls for action and improving interdepartmental coordination
2. Increase coherence between commitments and actions concerning First Nations and Inuit
3. Generate systemic change
4. Improve collaboration and co-build solutions with Indigenous representatives
5. Understand the purpose of calls for action that are sometimes worded imprecisely or deemed unrealistic

Cross-disciplinary calls for action

Concerning various public services (Nos. 1 to 26)

6. Engage in a process with indigenous representatives to enshrine UNDRIP within Québec's legislative framework
7. Establish a clear portrait of First Nations
8. Address the housing issue as a matter of urgency
9. Work with indigenous authorities to develop a strategy to protect and promote First Nations and Inuit language rights
10. Base advances in education on a strategic vision
11. Have structured professional development programs so that mindsets and practices evolve

Calls for action by public service

Police services (Nos. 27 to 39)

12. Ensure comprehensive, concerted implementation of calls for action within municipal police departments
13. Recognize Indigenous police services as autonomous bodies and essential services
14. Put Indigenous women's safety first

Justice services (Nos. 40 to 55)

15. Make self-determination and systemic changes priorities in matters of justice
16. Strengthen interdepartmental collaboration
17. Ensure the quality of MJQ collaborations with indigenous partners
18. Increase access to justice services in Nunavik without delay.

Correctional services (Nos. 56 to 73)

19. Act throughout the prison system to aim systemic change and eliminate all discrimination
20. Create conditions for fruitful collaboration with all current and potential Indigenous partners
21. Provide decent and appropriate detention conditions for indigenous women without delay

Health services and social services (Nos. 74 to 107)

22. Adopt a comprehensive long-term strategy to bring about systemic change
23. Make discrimination prevention part of major departmental policies
24. Grant leverage to ensure that committee work achieves results
25. Extend population-based responsibility to the entire indigenous population
26. Co-prioritize in order to structure tripartite work over the longer term

Youth protection services (Nos. 108 to 137)

27. Strengthen collaboration between MSSS and Indigenous organizations for effective youth protection action
28. Acquire the resources and expertise for urgently addressing Indigenous youth protection issues
29. Aim for concrete and lasting outcomes by focusing on self-determination, as quickly as possible
30. Quickly implement legislative changes in the spirit of the Viens Commission
31. Base youth protection reforms on guidelines aimed at bringing about systemic change
32. Ensure follow-up and consistency in implementing calls for action concerning youth protection in Indigenous communities



APPENDIX 2

SPECIFIC CALLS FOR ACTION TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEXT THEMATIC FOLLOW-UP REPORT BY THE PROTECTEUR DU CITOYEN

No. 108: Amend the *Youth Protection Act* to exempt Indigenous children from the application of maximum periods for alternative living environments as stipulated in sections 53.0.1 and 91.1.

No. 110: Enshrine in the *Youth Protection Act* a requirement that a family council be set up as soon as an Indigenous child is involved in a youth protection intervention, whether or not the child is at risk of being placed.

No. 118: Fund the development of intensive support services in urban environments and Indigenous communities covered by an agreement for parents of Indigenous children who have been placed in foster care.

No. 119: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to finance the development of intensive support services in communities not covered by an agreement for parents of Indigenous children who have been placed in care.

No. 121: Make sure that a cultural intervention plan is produced and implemented whenever an Indigenous child must be placed in a non-Indigenous alternative environment.

No. 127: Increase availability and funding for local services intended for Indigenous children and their families, including crisis management services, in communities covered by an agreement and in urban environments.

No. 128: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to increase the availability of local services intended for Indigenous children and their families, including crisis management services, in communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 129: Clarify and change the eligibility criteria for Indigenous foster families, including the criteria for the physical environment and the follow-up done with foster families, so that those families can access the services they need to provide the best possible environment for the children.

No. 130: Ensure that families and significant people who are not represented by an association and who foster Indigenous children receive financial compensation equivalent to family-type resources under the *Act respecting the representation of family-type resources and certain intermediate resources and the negotiation process for their group agreement*.

No. 131: Invest to increase the number of available spaces where needed at youth rehabilitation centres in Indigenous communities covered by an agreement.

No. 132: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to increase the number of available spaces where needed at youth rehabilitation centres in Indigenous communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 133: Increase the level of and funding for post-placement services for indigenous children in communities covered by an agreement and in urban centres.

No. 134: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to increase the level of and funding for post-placement services in Indigenous communities not covered by an agreement.

APPENDIX 3

CALLS FOR ACTION COVERED BY THIS DATA COLLECTION (AND WHICH WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE NEXT THEMATIC FOLLOW-UP REPORT)

Cross-disciplinary calls for action

No. 1: Make a public apology to members of First Nations and Québec's Inuit for the harm caused by laws, policies, standards and the practices of public service providers.

No. 2 – To National Assembly: Adopt a motion to recognize and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Québec.

No. 3: Working with Indigenous authorities, draft and enact legislation guaranteeing that the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be taken into account in the body of legislation under its jurisdiction.

No. 4: Incorporate ethno-cultural data collection into the operation, reporting and decision making of public sector organizations.

No. 5: Make the necessary administrative and legislative changes to allow Indigenous authorities to access data about their populations at all times, in the health and social services sectors in particular.

No. 6: Make population surveys on Indigenous peoples an ongoing research priority with sustained funding.

No. 7 – To Indigenous authorities: Make all the First Nations band councils and Inuit village councils aware of the importance of participating in surveys of their populations.

No. 8: Conclude agreements with the federal government under which both levels of government financially support the development and improvement of housing in all indigenous communities in Québec.

No. 9: Continue the financial investments to build housing in Nunavik, taking families' actual needs into account.

No. 10: Contribute financially to social housing initiatives for Indigenous people in urban environments.

No. 11: Make implementation of student retention and academic success measures for Indigenous students and young people a priority and allocate the amounts required, guided by the needs identified by the Indigenous peoples themselves and complying with their ancestral traditions.

No. 12: Amend the Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the *Charter of the French language* to extend the exception to all professionals exercising their professions on a reserve, in a settlement in which an Indigenous community lives or on Category I and Category I-N lands within the meaning of the *Act respecting the land regime in the James Bay and New Québec*, regardless of where they reside.

No. 13: Expand the scope of the Regulation to authorize professional orders to make an exception to the application of section 35 of the *Charter of the French language* to exempt interpreters and translators of Indigenous languages from the French-language knowledge requirements.

No. 14: Make Indigenous language translation and interpreting services permanently accessible throughout Québec by establishing a centralized database of government-employed interpreters and translators.

No. 15: Promote and permit bilingual and trilingual signage in establishments that serve large Indigenous populations who speak a language other than French.

No. 16: Make forms available in Indigenous language translations at government service centres.

No. 17: Ensure that all government correspondence with Indigenous authorities is accompanied by either an English or Indigenous language translation, at the choice of the community or organization in question.

No. 18: Issue a directive to establishments in the health and social services network ending the prohibition against speaking an Indigenous language in the context of housing, health care and services.

No. 19: Create and fund permanent positions for liaison officers selected by Indigenous authorities to be accessible in the villages of Nunavik, First Nations communities and Indigenous friendship centres in Québec.

No. 20: Carry out a public information campaign on Indigenous peoples, their history, their cultural diversity and the discrimination issues they face, working with Indigenous authorities.

No. 21: Further enrich the Québec curriculum by introducing a fair and representative portrait of Québec First Nations and Inuit history, working with Indigenous authorities.

No. 22: Introduce concepts related to Indigenous history and culture as early as possible in the school curriculum.

No. 23: Include a component on Québec First Nations and Inuit in professional programs at colleges and universities (medicine, social work, law, journalism and other programs), working with Indigenous authorities.

No. 24: Make the professional orders aware of the importance of including content in their training programs, developed in cooperation with Indigenous authorities, that addresses cultural safeguards and the needs and characteristics of First Nations and Inuit.

No. 25: Make training developed in cooperation with Indigenous authorities that promotes cultural sensitivity, cultural competence and cultural safeguards available to all public service managers, professionals and employees who are likely to interact with Indigenous peoples.

Out of respect for the cultural diversity of Indigenous nations, this training must be adapted to the specific Indigenous nation(s) with which the employees interact.

No. 26: Provide ongoing and recurrent training to all public service managers, professionals and employees who are likely to interact with Indigenous peoples.

Police services

No. 27 – To Indigenous police forces: Adopt and implement a conflict of interest policy for the handling of investigative and intervention matters.

No. 28 – To Indigenous authorities: Explore the possibility of setting up regional Indigenous police forces.

No. 29: Revise how the training of recruits hired by Indigenous police officers is financed to reduce the cost difference between the various categories of candidates.

No. 30: Inject the funds required to ensure that the offering of regular and continuing education at the École nationale de police du Québec is fully accessible in English and French.

No. 31: In collaboration with Indigenous authorities, establish a complete status report on the state of the infrastructure and equipment available to Indigenous police forces, the wages and the geographic (distance, road access, etc.) and social (criminality, poverty, etc.) realities of the communities they serve.

No. 32: Initiate negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to agree on a budgetary envelope for upgrading Indigenous police force wages, infrastructure and equipment.

No. 33 – To Indigenous authorities: Assess the possibility of implementing joint purchasing policies for all Indigenous police forces in Québec.

No. 34: Amend Section 90 of the *Police Act* to readily acknowledge the existence and status of Indigenous police forces as being similar to those of other police organizations in Québec.

No. 35: Undertake negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to ensure recurring and sustainable funding for all Indigenous policing.

No. 36: Modify the process for allocating budget resources to police forces to reflect the needs identified by Indigenous authorities in terms of infrastructure, human, financial and logistical resources and the individual realities of the communities or territories.

No. 37: Assess the possibility of setting up mixed intervention patrols (police officers and community workers) for vulnerable persons, both in urban environments and in First Nations communities and Inuit villages.

No. 38: Amend the *Police Act* to extend the time limit for filing police ethics complaints to three years.

No. 39: Conduct information campaigns among Indigenous populations concerning the existing complaints processes.

Justice services

No. 40: Fund projects developed and managed by Indigenous authorities that are aimed at documenting and revitalizing Indigenous law in all sectors deemed to be of interest.

No. 41: Amend the existing laws, including the *Act respecting the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions*, to allow agreements to be signed to create specific justice administration systems with Indigenous nations, communities or organizations active in urban areas.

No. 42: Encourage the introduction of community justice programs and the implementation of alternative measures programs for Indigenous adults in all cities where the Indigenous presence requires it.

No. 43: Set aside a sustainable budget for Indigenous community justice programs and for the organizations responsible for keeping them up to date, proportionate to the responsibilities assumed and adjusted annually to ensure its stability, factoring in the normal increases in operating costs of such programs.

No. 44: Amend the *Act respecting legal aid* to introduce special tariffs of fees for cases involving Indigenous people, in both civil and criminal matters.

No. 45: Invest in developing premises adequate to the exercise of justice in each of the communities where the Itinerant Court sits, as soon as possible.

No. 46 - To towns and municipalities of Québec: Stop incarcerating people who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless for non-payment of fines for municipal offences.

No. 47 - To towns and municipalities of Québec: Set up a PAJIC for people who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

No. 48: Amend the *Code of Penal Procedure* to stop the incarceration of people who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless for non-payment of fines for municipal offences.

No. 49: Provide sustainable funding to PAJICs for people who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

No. 50: Institute the use of videoconferences for bail hearings as soon as possible for accused persons in remote areas, particularly in Nunavik.

No. 51: Set aside a budget envelope earmarked exclusively for the writing of Gladue reports and increase the remuneration for all writers.

No. 52: Increase the number of writers authorized to produce Gladue reports.

No. 53: Fund the organizations involved in producing Gladue reports so that they can enhance and standardize the training provided to accredited writers, in cooperation with Indigenous authorities.

No. 54: Periodically review the quality of work done by Gladue report writers, in cooperation with Indigenous authorities.

No. 55: Provide for Gladue letters to be written automatically whenever an Indigenous person enters the system, and provide funding therefor.

Correctional services

No. 56: Train all Québec probation officers to prepare Indigenous pre-sentencing reports and teach them the reassuring cultural approach for collecting information.

No. 57: Develop an assessment tool specific to Indigenous offenders with the collaboration of experts from First Nations and Inuit peoples.

No. 58: Implement, as quickly as possible, and in all regions of Québec, alternative measures to incarceration for people sentenced to an intermittent sentence, including sustainable funding.

No. 59: Measure and report annually on the situation regarding transfers of Indigenous inmates, in collaboration with partner Indigenous organizations.

No. 60: Set up a program to finance family travel when the government has no choice other than to incarcerate an inmate in a provincial establishment far from their residence or home community.

No. 61: Allow videoconference communications between inmates and their family members when there is no choice other than to incarcerate an inmate in a provincial establishment far from their residence or home community.

No. 62: Modify the rules in effect regarding telephone calls so that long-distance calls can be made at the same cost as local calls.

No. 63: Immediately implement all the recommendations set forth by the Québec Ombudsman in its special report on detention conditions, administration of justice and crime prevention in Nunavik.

No. 64: Launch a committee, as soon as possible, in collaboration with Indigenous authorities, on improving detention conditions for Indigenous women, from the time of their arrest until their liberation.

No. 65: Extend the obligations regarding health care to all medical personnel working with inmates, by regulation or legislative amendment.

No. 66: Recognize that inmates' medical files belong to them and computerize these files using Dossier santé Québec.

No. 67: Permit the inmates' complete medical files to be shared with the competent authorities during transfers or releases, by regulation or legislative amendment.

No. 68: Extend to all correctional facilities in Québec the offer of culturally comforting activities for their Indigenous clients, such as craft workshops, meals with traditional foods, sharing circles, access to a sweat lodge and spiritual support provided by Elders.

No. 69 – To Indigenous authorities: Identify, for each Indigenous people, Elders interested in intervening in correctional environments and register them in a shared bank of resources that the correctional authorities can consult.

No. 70: Establish guidelines for the security verification of Indigenous sacred objects, in collaboration with Indigenous authorities.

No. 71: Train correctional officers to recognize Indigenous sacred objects, in collaboration with Indigenous authorities.

No. 72: Ensure availability in urban environments of places reserved for Indigenous clients in existing residential community centres or, if necessary, conclude an agreement with an Indigenous organization to create this type of resource.

No. 73: Modify the *Act respecting the Québec correctional system* to include different processes and evaluation criteria for Indigenous offenders who address the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles.

Health and social services

No. 74: Amend the *Act respecting health services and social services* and the *Act respecting health services and social services* for Cree Native persons to enshrine the concept of cultural safeguards in it, in cooperation with Indigenous authorities.

No. 75: Encourage the health and social services network institutions to set up services and programs based on cultural safeguard principles developed for Indigenous peoples and in cooperation with them.

No. 76: Provide sustainable funding for services and programs based on cultural safeguard principles developed for Indigenous peoples.

No. 77: Take the necessary measures to make emergency medical transportation services by land or by air, depending on the circumstances, available as soon as possible and on an ongoing basis in all communities, despite constraints, in cooperation with Indigenous authorities.

No. 78: Encourage the signing of agreements between public health and social services institutions and Indigenous authorities to guarantee spaces and a culturally safe service for aging Indigenous persons and their families.

No. 79: Financially support the establishment of long-term care services in communities covered by an agreement.

No. 80: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to develop long-term care services in communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 81: Make the development of culturally appropriate spaces for Indigenous nations a priority in public health institutions, particularly in regions where there is a substantial Indigenous population.

No. 82: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to establish a formal funding mechanism for returning to the communities at the end of life and for the development of palliative care in the communities.

No. 83: Develop priority diagnostic service corridors for Indigenous clients of all ages through tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities.

No. 84: Financially support the development of culturally safe, family-centred respite services in communities covered by an agreement and in urban areas.

No. 85: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to develop culturally safe, family-centred respite services in communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 86: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to sustainably fund projects created by Indigenous nations, communities and organizations that seek to identify, reduce, prevent and eliminate sexual assault.

No. 87 – To Indigenous authorities: Raise awareness among the populations of indigenous communities about the nature of sexual assault and promote healthy and respectful sexuality education.

No. 88: Fund the development of a network of Indigenous women's shelters in communities covered by an agreement and in urban centres, working with Indigenous authorities.

No. 89: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to develop Indigenous women's shelters in communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 90: Financially support the establishment of culturally safe addiction treatment centres and detoxification centres in urban areas and in communities covered by an agreement.

No. 91: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to increase services for addiction prevention and treatment in Indigenous communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 92: Working with the federal government and Indigenous authorities, draw up less stringent admission rules at addiction treatment centres for off-reserve First Nations members and Inuit.

No. 93: Financially support the development of services for suicide prevention and mental health in communities covered by an agreement and in urban centres, in cooperation with Indigenous authorities.

No. 94: Draw up a protocol for crisis management in communities covered by an agreement that involves both the public health network and the participation of appropriate Indigenous authorities.

No. 95: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to increase services for suicide prevention and mental health in Indigenous communities not covered by an agreement.

No. 96: Encourage institutions in the health and social services network to set up services inspired by the Clinique Minowé model in urban settings, working with the Indigenous authorities and organizations in their territory.

No. 97: Provide recurrent, sustainable funding for services that draw on the Clinique Minowé model and are developed in urban settings for Indigenous peoples.

No. 98: Issue a directive to urban health and social service institutions to establish clear service corridors and communication protocols with Indigenous authorities in the communities.

No. 99: Provide sustainable funding for services to homeless Indigenous clientele in urban areas.

No. 100: Fund the creation of a shelter specifically reserved for homeless Inuit clientele in Montréal.

No. 101: Initiate discussions with the federal government to dovetail the provincial prescription drug insurance plan with the Non-Insured Health Benefits program in order to offer the most comprehensive, equitable coverage for members of Indigenous communities.

No. 102: Encourage the professional orders involved (doctors and pharmacists) to give their members training about the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program.

No. 103: Initiate a strategic planning session on non-urgent medical transportation that includes the federal government, health and social services network institutions and Indigenous authorities.

No. 104: Initiate discussions with the federal government to extend the Jordan Principle to adults.

No. 105: Working with the federal government, develop an overall approach for applying the Jordan Principle, coupled with budget forecasts for all First Nations and Inuit.

No. 106: Rapidly implement the recommendations of the Comité sur l'application du PL-21 in First Nations communities and Inuit villages.

No. 107: Follow up as quickly as possible on proposals to improve working conditions from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

Youth protection services

No. 109: Amend the *Youth Protection Act* to include a provision on care that is consistent with Indigenous traditions, drawing on Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, 2017.

No. 111: Provide professionals working in Indigenous communities with access to provincial information management systems (such as the PIJ).

No. 112: Share the new directives and standards that apply in youth protection with all professionals responsible for such cases in Indigenous communities in real time.

No. 113: Make youth protection evaluations and decisions in a way that takes the historical, social and cultural factors related to First Nations and Inuit into account.

No. 114: Provide judges presiding in the Court of Québec, Youth Division, with reports similar to the Gladue reports used in the criminal justice system for cases involving Indigenous children.

No. 115: Validate the evaluation tools used in youth protection with Indigenous clinical experts.

No. 116: Overhaul the clinical evaluation tools used in youth protection whose effects are deemed to be discriminatory toward Indigenous peoples, in cooperation with experts from the First Nations and Inuit peoples.

No. 117: Amend the *Act respecting health services and social services* to include a provision requiring workers to record objectives and methods for preserving cultural identity in the intervention plans and individualized service plans of all children who identify as First Nation or Inuit and are placed outside their family environments.

No. 120: Working with Indigenous authorities, draw up a placement policy specific to members of First Nations and Inuit that provides that Indigenous children be first placed with their immediate or extended families and, if that is not possible, with members of their communities or nations.

No. 122: Assign additional resources to remote Indigenous communities where access to lawyers is limited.

No. 123: Provide financial support for hiring courtworkers and promote the use of paralegal services to support and accompany parents and children who are subject to the *Youth Protection Act*.

No. 124: Initiate tripartite negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities, as applicable, to agree on a budget to provide for Indigenous parents or guardians to attend hearings at the Court of Québec, Youth Division (transportation, meals and lodging costs).

No. 125: Recognize and financially support cultural healing approaches when proposed by families subject to the *Youth Protection Act*.

No. 126: Working with Indigenous authorities, make an annual calculation of the number of Indigenous children subject to the *Youth Protection Act* and obtain any other data deemed relevant under the Act in order to accurately assess the presence of Indigenous children in the system and how they are treated.

No. 135: Provide communities that want to update their agreements or to take over youth protection services under s. 37.7 of the *Youth Protection Act* with financial support and immediate and unrestricted guidance.

No. 136: Encourage the conclusion of agreements under s. 37.5 of the *Youth Protection Act* by relaxing criteria and simplifying the process that leads to the conclusion of such agreements.

No. 137: Provide communities that want to take over youth protection services under s. 37.5 of the *Youth Protection Act* with financial support and immediate and unrestricted guidance.

Tracking mechanism

No. 138: Give the Québec Ombudsman the mandate to assess and follow up on the implementation of all the calls for action proposed in this report until such time as they have been fully executed.

No. 139 – To National Assembly: Ensure that the budget granted to the Québec Ombudsman is adjusted to take into account the new responsibilities that it has been given.

No. 140: Include in the *Public Protector Act* the obligation for the Québec Ombudsman to produce and make public each year a progress report on the implementation of the Commission's calls for action until such time as they are fully executed.

No. 141: In cooperation with the representatives of the Indigenous peoples of Québec, translate this Commission's summary report as soon as possible into all Indigenous languages used in written form in Québec and distribute it.

No. 142: Ensure that the content of this Commission's summary report is distributed as soon as possible by means of alternative oral distribution methods identified by the Indigenous authorities themselves based on their peoples' needs and realities.

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADPQ	Association des directeurs de police du Québec	JBNQA	James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement
AFNQL	Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador	LPSAO	<i>Loi de la Protection Sociale Atikamekw d'Opitciwan</i>
AGHSSS	<i>Act respecting the governance of the health and social services system</i>	MES	Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur
ASSSS	<i>Act respecting health services and social services</i>	MEQ	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
BEI	Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes	MJQ	Ministère de la Justice du Québec
CAVAC	Centre d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels	MLF	Ministère de la Langue française
CERP	Public inquiry Commission on relations between indigenous peoples and certain public services in Québec : listening, reconciliation and progress	MSP	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
CFL	<i>Charter of the French Language</i>	MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
CISSS	Integrated health and social services centre	NPJSQ	Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec
CIUSSS	Integrated university health and social services centre	NRBHSS	Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
CPNSSS	Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux	PAJIC	Programme d'accompagnement justice et intervention communautaire
CSO	correctional service officers	PAJ-SM	Programme d'accompagnement justice et santé mentale
C-92 Act	<i>Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i>	PHAQ	Québec Affordable Housing Program
DYP	Director of Youth Protection	PIJ	Projet intégration jeunesse
DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	PMRG-AMU	Programme de mesure de rechange général pour Autochtones en milieu urbain
EMIPIC	Mixed intervention team – Police officers and community workers	QAFNIPD	Quebec Association of First Nations and Inuit Police Directors
ENPQ	École nationale de police du Québec	QNW	Quebec Native Women
FNEC	First Nation Education Council	RCAAQ	Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec
FNQLHSSC	First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission	SIRCAAQ	Société immobilière du Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec
HSSN	Health and social services network	SMSC	Sous-ministériat des services correctionnels
IPF	Indigenous police force	SQ	Sûreté du Québec
		SRPNI	Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit

UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UQAM	Université du Québec à Montréal
UQAT	Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue
YPA	<i>Youth Protection Act</i>





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