

THE GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION TO IMPROVE DETENTION AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CONDITIONS IN NUNAVIK

Puvirnituk, September 2, 2016. – While visiting the Nord-du-Québec region, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy, Minister of Public Security and Minister responsible for the Montréal region, Martin Coiteux, the Minister responsible for Native Affairs, Geoffrey Kelley, and the Member of the National Assembly for Ungava, Jean Boucher, met with different partners and emphasized several measures and initiatives taken by the Gouvernement du Québec on public security in Nunavik, with the aim of improving detention and social reintegration conditions in that region.

“After publication of the Ombudsperson’s report concerning detention conditions in Nunavik, I made a condition to visit the region, particularly with the goal of better understanding the local realities and strengthening cooperation with the Inuit community. All the partners met agree on the importance of offering sustainable solutions for the Nunavimmiut. The Government thus is continuing its efforts to improve detention conditions in Nunavik and offer services adapted and geared to prevention and social reintegration,” Minister Coiteux pointed out.

“The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) is fully engaged in improving the services offered to detainees in Nunavik and facilitating their reintegration into their communities. We are committed to collaborating closely with the Québec government and also convinced that the combination of the detention facilities proposal and the creation of a working committee will definitely support us finding the best solutions possible for our people in a manner that is respectful of our culture,” said KRG Chairperson Jennifer Munick.

Measures deployed to improve detention conditions

Upon the release of the Québec Ombudsman’s report last February, the Gouvernement du Québec, with the cooperation of representatives of the Kativik Regional Government, announced that it would take immediate actions and deploy a comprehensive government action plan with the goal of improving Inuit detention conditions. This action plan contains 31 recommendations and nearly sixty actions, some of which have already been put forward:

- The correctional service officers from now on will produce a report upon each of their stays at the Kuujuaq, Puvirnituk and Kuujjuaraapik custody facilities. The objective is to produce the inventory of material and services offered and ensure rigorous monitoring of the condition of the facilities so as to respond to any breach as soon as possible.
- Various basic supplies (including mattresses and bedding) will be stored near the Puvirnituk police station. Their quantity will be sufficient to meet the needs.

- Chartered flights will be added between Abitibi and Nunavik, allowing reduction of the number of persons in detention in the cells.

A new agreement with the Makitautik Inuit Community Residential Centre

In addition, the Gouvernement du Québec has made a partnership agreement with the Makitautik Inuit Community Residential Centre, located in Kangirsuk, for shelter of offenders in the community. This agreement, which covers a seven-month period and is renewable for the same term, will allow funding of nearly \$515,000 to be offered to the organization. For this agreement, the Makitautik Centre will be able to provide effective immediately, in addition to its 14 shelter spaces, services adapted to offenders from the Inuit community, which account for their culture and traditions and assure better reintegration into their community.

“If we want to reduce the number of individuals coming from Nunavik in our justice and correctional systems, it is essential to invest in social reintegration measures. Today’s announcement makes it possible to offer adapted services that meet their special realities in order to favour their reintegration into their community, all in respect for their culture,” Mr. Kelley mentioned.

Creation of a working committee concerning a real estate solution to improve detention conditions

A working committee, composed of representatives of the Gouvernement du Québec and the Inuit authorities, has been created to find a real estate solution concerning management of the correctional population appearing in the Nord-du-Québec region. Since the objective is to improve the detention conditions of inmates, the committee members will work in collaboration to propose a solution that can meet this region’s needs.

“Nunavik has its own specific problems. The Gouvernement du Québec wants to provide effective solutions that account for its particularities. I am delighted with the ongoing collaborative work between the Government and the local representatives,” pointed out Luc Blanchette, Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks and Minister responsible for the Nord-du-Québec region

“The Government has been proactive upon the release of the Ombudsperson’s report. We will continue our good cooperation with the Kativik Regional Government and our concerted efforts to find adapted solutions. I am pleased at my colleagues’ presence in this region, so that they can recognize the improvements on the ground,” Mr. Boucher concluded.

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