



**Press Release**

***For immediate release***

**Quebec Justice Minister Sonia Lebel aims to resolve justice issues in Nunavik**

**Kuujuaq (Québec), April 26, 2019** – Quebec Justice Minister Sonia Lebel said she was committed to resolving several of the issues surrounding the administration of justice in Nunavik.

“I want to express to you that I have a clear understanding of what the situation is,” Ms. LeBel said during a meeting in Puvirnituk on Wednesday with officials from the Kativik Regional Government and Makivik Corporation.

Numerous problems were raised during the meeting. For instance in Kuujuaq the crown prosecutor’s office and the legal aid office were recently closed without consultation or prior notice. Travel budgets to hear witnesses have been cutback and several legal services have deteriorated.

“How are we able to move forward when services are closed down on us? Right now the situation is stressful. We hope that the province will come up with initiatives to improve services in the region,” KRG Chairperson Jennifer Munick told the Minister during the meeting. “We have so much to improve upon. Our people deserve more.”

The Minister said she clearly understood the frustrations expressed by the KRG Chairperson. She strongly supported the KRG demand for the implementation of a video appearance system in Nunavik to expedite the administration of justice and cut down on costly transportation costs. She welcomed the fact that a meeting on this issue will be held next month and will hopefully break the deadlock over this issue.

The Minister unfettered support for several of the initiatives put forward by the KRG may bode well for the future, inspiring hope that changes may soon be possible. During her trip, she had positive meetings with the Nunavik Community Justice Centre, with the victims support agent from Sapumijit in Inukjuak and with the staff of the Saqijuk program in Puvirnituk.

“I came to the North as a crown prosecutor in 2000. I want to push this forward and focus on small steps. By making small steps we cannot lose sight of the bigger picture.” Ms. LeBel said during the meeting.

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*The Kativik Regional Government is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel in areas such as municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use planning, civil security and economic development.*