

**CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL**

BETWEEN:

**THE FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY CARING SOCIETY**

- and -

**THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS**

Complainants

- and -

**THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Commission

- and -

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA**

**(representing the Honourable Minister of Indigenous Services)**

Third Party

- and -

**THE CHIEFS OF ONTARIO**

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA**

**THE NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION**

**THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP**

**COUNCIL**

Intervenors

- and -

**THE FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

Applicant

- and -

**THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS QUEBEC-LABRADOR**

Co-Applicant

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**AFFIDAVIT OF JESSIE MESSIER**

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I, the undersigned, Jessie Messier, Health Services Manager for the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), having its place of business at 250 place Chef-Michel-Laveau, suite 102, Wendake, province of

Quebec, G0A 4V0, **SOLEMNLY AFFIRM AS FOLLOWS:**

1. I have been working as Health Services Manager for the FNQLHSSC for two years.
2. I previously worked as the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Agent at the FNQLHSSC. My functions included being in charge of Jordan's Principle at the FNQLHSSC, and my job was to counsel and help First Nations communities and organizations in resolving problems surrounding access to services. I was also a team leader and interim manager for the health services sector.
3. In my current managerial functions, I lead the health services sector, the mission of which is to provide technical support and closely participate in the development of strategies aimed at supporting community initiatives respectful of First Nations needs and cultures. The health sector has expertise and provides support with regard to healthy lifestyles, access to services (e.g., Jordan's Principle and Non-Insured Health Benefits), the development of strategies to support community initiatives and coordination of Team Eastern Door and the North for the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships and the North American Indigenous Games.

***First Nations' vision and approach***

4. In fall 2016, the Health and Social Services Directors Network of non-agreement communities in Quebec recommended that regionally available coordination funding for the provision of child and family services whose needs were not fully satisfied by existing programming under the substantive equality principle be used to provide every community with Jordan's Principle coordinators.
5. In 2017, non-agreement communities in Quebec obtained funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to hire a resource person to support their population and inform them of existing services in relation to Jordan's Principle.
6. All non-agreement communities now have Jordan's Principle coordinators. Certain First Nations organizations, such as Indigenous Friendship Centres, have also deployed Jordan's Principle coordinators.

7. The support of local coordinators greatly promotes the application of Jordan's Principle. The flexibility of this structure consolidates the implementation of a holistic approach that takes into account the specific needs of First Nations. Moreover, local coordination promotes the development of a global and integrated vision of the services offered, in complementarity with existing services.

8. Furthermore, the introduction of Jordan's Principle coordination greatly facilitate the identification of children whose development and particular needs require services.

9. Since 2018, the FNQLHSSC coordinates meetings between Jordan's Principle coordinators.

10. Since 2022, such meetings occur regularly, i.e., three or four times per year.

11. Their goal is to support community and First Nations interveners in their local coordination work by promoting exchanges, information updating and dissemination and best practice sharing. Regional ISC officers (ISC-Quebec) also attend these meetings.

12. In addition, the FNQLHSSC sits on Quebec's regional table on Jordan's Principle, which was created in 2018, and whose meetings are coordinated by ISC-Quebec (**Exhibit JM-1**).

13. That said, the regional table hasn't convened in several years.

14. Its remit is to communicate First Nations children's specific needs, propose potential solutions and give advice to facilitate the implementation of Jordan's Principle, among other things. While Jordan's Principle was being implemented, the table met three to four times annually.

15. To my knowledge, not every province and territory of Canada has a regional table.

***The current situation regarding Jordan's Principle in Quebec communities***

16. As of summer 2024, there was very little backlog in the processing of

applications under Jordan's Principle in Quebec.

17. This is in major part due to the structure of services in Quebec, i.e., the introduction of local Jordan's Principle coordinators, and the fact the ISC-Quebec allocated its officers throughout the territory.

18. In other words, every ISC-Quebec officer was assigned a number of communities.

19. As a result, they have a better understanding of the communities, which helps expedite the application analysis.

20. It is my understanding that officers in other regions of Canada may work differently.

21. In Quebec, the current backlog is mainly due to cuts made by ISC-National in ISC-Quebec's resources.

22. As of March 2025, the ISC-Quebec team will be nearly complete, with six out of seven positions filled.

23. That said, the backlog will persist for several months, as personnel can only analyze and process so many applications daily.

24. Thus, even if all positions are filled, the delays in Jordan's Principle applications will not disappear immediately.

25. In addition, I noticed that ISC-National's decisions and orientations are not officially communicated in writing. As such, changes are demanded with no prior official communication from SAC-National. This major information sharing deficiency often prevents coordinators from having all the information required to coordinate and process applications.

26. In the letter filed by the Department of Justice Canada on January 17, 2025 (**LEX-5000166425**), it is stated that until fall 2024, the region of Quebec was one of the provinces

with the least backlog in the processing of Jordan's Principle applications.

27. This document is of crucial importance, as it sheds light on the current delays regarding Jordan's Principle, especially with regard to emergency lists. Jordan's Principle coordinators and health and social services directors of First Nations communities, to only name a few, will have to refer to it.

28. What's more, as Health Services Manager, I will have to discuss its contents with the First Nations communities in Quebec, who will also have to refer to it.

29. Despite this, the document is not yet available in French, even though over 20 First Nations communities in Quebec work in that language.

30. Many community health services directors and Jordan's Principle coordinators have their Indigenous language as a first language, and French as a second language. In this context, the mastery of a third language, in this English, does not correspond to the norm, especially in First Nations communities in Quebec that are far away from urban centres.

31. To my knowledge, all the facts exposed in this affidavit are true.

**SOLEMNLY AFFIRMED** before me in Wendake, on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025.

*Marc-Olivier Brousseau*  
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**Marc-Olivier Brousseau**  
*Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of  
Quebec*

*Jessie Messier*  
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**Jessie Messier**  
*Health Services Manager*

No. 245527

**LIST OF EXHIBITS IN SUPPORT OF THE AFFIDAVIT OF MS. JESSIE  
MESSIER**

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**Exhibit JM-1:** Énoncé du mandat de la table de concertation régionale sur le Principe de Jordan au Québec – July 2019