

## Questions of Race are inevitably tied to Questions of Language

**Montreal, September 17th** – In Quebec, questions of race are inevitably tied to questions of language, Alliance Quebec President Brent Tyler told an official of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Wednesday.

The official, Mr. Doudou Diène, Special UN Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, is conducting a series of private and public hearings across the country organized in Canada with the help of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Mr. Tyler was one of several speaking in a closed session at the Université de Québec à Montréal.

Canada does not implement its United Nations human obligations on human rights, Mr. Tyler said. Under the Canadian Constitution, the national Parliament and provincial legislatures must implement treaties in their areas of jurisdiction.

Canada, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, tells the United Nations that the courts implement treaty obligations, he said. But Canadian courts have repeatedly ruled that United Nations human rights treaties have no effect in Canada because Parliament and the legislatures have not implemented them.

Most Canadian citizens who are members of Quebec's English-speaking communities are not descended from people who came from the British Isles. Mr. Tyler noted that a substantial proportion includes people with roots in the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

A significantly high proportion of people prosecuted or excluded under Quebec's language legislation are members of the province's cultural, ethnic and racial minorities, he said. Many of them express themselves publicly in Quebec in English. Virtually none are represented in the public services of Canada, Quebec or the City of Montreal or in leadership positions in trade unions, and professional or political organizations.

Mr. Tyler added that hate crimes are not adequately prosecuted in Quebec. This is also true when there is a language aspect to them. He cited a declaration by Raymond Villeneuve, leader of the Mouvement National de Libération du Québec to Voir magazine after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City. Mr. Villeneuve expressed admiration for Osama Bin Laden, and said that if he had the resources, he would drive a petro-chemical tanker to West Island, blow it up and kill English-speaking people there. The English-speaking Canadian citizens of West Island are ethnically and racially diverse and include Christians, Jews, Moslems,

Hindus and members of other religious groups. Mr. Tyler noted that Mr. Villeneuve was not prosecuted by Quebec authorities for these remarks.

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At 3:45 pm after he makes his remarks, Mr. Tyler will be available for interviews at the UQAM entrance at 1440 rue St-Denis. For more information, contact Rob Bull at (514) 932-3292-327