

## **Alliance Quebec Calls on Quebec Government to End State-Sponsored Harassment of Ethnic**

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**Montreal, Thursday, April 25, 2002** - Alliance Quebec President Brent Tyler today called on the Quebec government to end state-sponsored harassment of ethnics after Quebec's language police threatened to prosecute Pieros Karidogiannis for making mistakes when he speaks French to customers in his dry-cleaning shop.

Rahman Saifur Pervez Khan, an immigrant from Bangladesh, sold his store and fled Quebec when faced with a similar threat of prosecution for imperfect French two years ago. Mr. Khan had come to Canada to enjoy the human rights and personal freedom of a liberal democratic society. He fled Quebec because those freedoms were not available to him here.

When Quebec's language police harassed Jewish shopkeepers over selling special Passover food with English labeling the Helsinki Committee of the U.S. Congress accused Canada of violating the Helsinki Final Act. Canada's then ambassador to the U.S., Raymond Chretien, reaffirmed Canada's commitment to respect its international human rights obligations and the language police backed off the next day.

Tyler said, "The Quebec government has an obligation to respect the basic human rights and dignity of Pieros Karidogiannis and withdraw its threat of prosecution immediately." "If the government prosecutes Mr. Karidogiannis for the quality of his French," added Tyler, "Alliance Quebec will defend him vigorously."

*Alliance Quebec strives for the promotion of human rights and minority language rights and is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the English-speaking communities and institutions within Quebec.*