

## Press Conference

**Montreal, August 23, 2002** - Alliance Quebec will be holding a joint press conference with the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations on Monday, August 26, 2002 at 11 A.M. at the Holiday Inn Select, 99 Viger Street (corner of St. Urbain, facing Place d'Armes metro).

At that time, Alliance Quebec will issue a public statement regarding the sentencing of Raymond Villeneuve, president of the Mouvement de Libération Nationale du Québec, who has pleaded guilty to criminal harassment against Brent Tyler, a human rights lawyer and the president of Alliance Quebec, and of counseling others to commit criminal acts.

The original charges stem from comments published in *La Tempête*, a publication of the MLNQ, in which Mr. Tyler and "all those who associate with him" are referred to as "enemies of the Quebec people" who should be dealt with as such. Villeneuve's publication suggested that the best way to deal with these "enemies" was with a shotgun blast to the head. Villeneuve also counseled others to steal firearms.

Alliance Quebec believes that such acts should be treated as hate crimes in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Code (section 718.2) and agree with the call by the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations for the City of Montreal and the Montreal police and the SQ to set up hate crimes units, for provincial legislation to prohibit, in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, incitement to hate, contempt and discrimination and for mandatory training for Crown prosecutors and judges on hate crimes and on issues of racial, ethno-cultural and other forms of diversity.

We further believe that Mr. Tyler was targeted for his human rights advocacy. Under the United Nations' Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Canadian government has an obligation to protect human rights advocates from threats of this nature.

In the last few years, we have seen a number of fire-bombings and other acts of political violence, including the fire-bombing of a church where Mr. Tyler was to speak in defence of human rights. We call upon the government to meet their obligations under international agreements and to address the issue of domestic political violence and the intimidation of human rights advocates.

Should you require further information, please contact Ted Cash at 514-932-3292, extension 312.