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**Blatant Government Disregard for the Rights of Refugees
and Foreign Workers**

**Perfidious Government Measures to Curtail Refugee
Asylum Through Budget Implementation Bill**

- **Pauline Easton** -

When in the Opposition in Parliament, the Liberal Party railed against the Harper Conservative government's use of omnibus legislation to pass all kinds of self-serving measures to which the people never consented. It pretended to speak openly and loudly about how wrong the practice was and even pointed to the abuse of the democratic process, intimating the problems this could cause. Now its own repeated use of omnibus legislation, such as the Budget Implementation Bill, shows that its aim was not to uphold any principle which would defend the interests of the polity but to demean the Harper government for self-serving purposes. Canadians are now concerned about the government's self-serving measures which are an assault on the intent of international laws that defend refugees, provide asylum, and protect them as a duty. It is now known that tucked away in the Trudeau government's omnibus bill, *Budget Implementation Act, 2019, No. 1*, is an amendment to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) which sneaks in unacceptable changes. This shows that the cynicism of this government knows no bounds.

Under current law and international agreements Canada must grant a hearing to those claiming asylum once they have reached Canadian soil, except for those denied that possibility under the Safe Third Country Agreement with the U.S. Under the proposed change, refugee claimants would no longer automatically receive a hearing at the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) after arrival in Canada to evaluate their claim for asylum if they had previously made a refugee claim in another country with which Canada has an information sharing-agreement. At present this appears to include Australia, New Zealand and the UK as well as the U.S.[1] Instead of a hearing, their case would be evaluated through a paper application process to be ruled on by an immigration officer. This change would exclude many of those seeking refugee status from a proper hearing given that they typically would be arriving in Canada via other countries.



Richard Goldman, a lawyer with the Montreal-based Committee to Aid Refugees, points out that the proposed change "would be turning back the clock to before 1985, when the Supreme Court

of Canada ruled that all refugee claimants have the right to an oral hearing."[2]

Thousands of people have been forced to flee their country of origin because of economic strife, war or violence (including various unjust wars of aggression and so-called regime change that Canada has participated in), with many determined to seek refuge in Canada. Often, they have first had to travel through the U.S. Once intercepted by U.S. border officials, they make a refugee claim, hoping to be released to continue on to Canada. To gain access to Canadian soil, they are forced to cross irregularly at places such as Roxham Road in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Quebec, because of the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement. Even without the proposed change in the budget implementation bill, this Agreement already allows Canada to turn back all refugee claimants who arrive from the U.S. at official border crossings.



This part was already established when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the creation of the Ministry of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction on July 28, 2018 and appointed Bill Blair as Minister. Through perfidious sleight of hand, the Trudeau government found a way to link vulnerable migrants with border security and organized crime. By making the irregular crossing of asylum seekers at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Quebec and anywhere else in Canada an issue of law and order, Trudeau turned those seeking asylum into a criminal category, all in the name of upholding fair treatment and rule of law, which is unconscionable. Trudeau's mandate letter to the minister reads in part: "Your goals are to ensure that our borders remain secure and to lead cross-government efforts to reduce organized crime. You will work to ensure Canada's borders are managed

to promote legitimate travel and trade while keeping Canadians safe and treating everyone fairly, in accordance with our laws. You will also play a leading role in our efforts to reduce gun violence. [You] are the Minister responsible for our strategy to manage the challenge of irregular migration."[3]

Creation of the Federal Ministry of Border Security and Organized Crime

The new ministry's creation was an attempt on the part of the Trudeau government to establish a causality between organized crime and "irregular migration." The reality is that people are crossing the border irregularly because the Safe Third Country Agreement with the U.S. prevents them from applying as refugees at official border posts. Logically, the solution to this problem would be to cancel this agreement and allow refugees from the U.S. to apply in a regular way.

The Trudeau government rejected this path on October 22, 2018, when Canadian immigration officials determined the U.S. remains a safe third country for asylum seekers. They had the gall to reach this verdict despite the Trump administration's crackdown on what it terms illegal aliens and all migrants for that matter, its separation of families, detention of women and children, and illegal deportations, amongst other crimes the U.S. government is committing. Documents obtained by the Canadian Press through access-to-information show that Canada conducted a review of its Safe Third Country agreement with the U.S. from January to March, 2017.

"Canada's analyses of these U.S. policies were redacted from the documents," the Canadian Press reported. The overall conclusion reached by Canadian officials nonetheless was that the United States "continues to meet the requirements for designation as a safe third country." [4]

This showed that Canada as a land of injustice would become worse, especially with regard to what it called "irregular migration," as if the plight of refugees is ever "regular." This injustice has only deepened with the creation of the Ministry of Border Security and Organized Crime, inspired by U.S. Homeland Security and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the dreaded ICE, which many in the U.S. want abolished. ICE is the U.S. federal police agency used by former President Obama and President Trump to terrorize what are called "undocumented" immigrants and to oppress and separate families crossing into the U.S. after fleeing various threats in their home country.

The direction Canada has taken in matters related to security is to integrate Canada's laws and police and intelligence forces to U.S. Homeland Security in the name of meeting current security challenges. This is tantamount to relying on the god's of plague to rid the people of the plague. More, importantly, the measures have completely undermined any basis for sovereignty vested in a Canadian nation-state. Even though Canada was a creation of first the British Empire in the first place and then became subordinate to U.S. imperialism, the significance of the integration which has taken place in the last 20 years are becoming very evident to the public because of the results which are making Canada an active appeaser of and actor in the crimes the U.S. imperialists are committing in their striving for world domination. The working class must constitute the nation by developing its independent thinking on these issues and ensure it takes a stand to defend the rights of all under all conditions and circumstances.



Background U.S. Smart Border Declaration

The U.S.-Canada "Smart Border Declaration" was signed in December 2001, by Tom Ridge, Director of Homeland Security in the administration of President George W. Bush for the U.S. and by then-Deputy Prime Minister John Manley for Canada.

The declaration includes a 30-point plan with a grandiose title designed to cover up the integration and subordination of Canada border enforcement and security to U.S. Homeland Security: "Action Plan to Enhance the Security of Our Shared Border While Facilitating the Legitimate Flow of People and Goods." The plan has what it calls "Four Pillars": the Secure Flow of People, the Secure Flow Of Goods, a Secure Infrastructure, and Information Sharing; and, coordination in the enforcement of these objectives." [5]

The 30-point Smart Border Action Plan includes:

- biometric identifiers,
- permanent resident cards,
- a single alternative inspection system,
- refugee/asylum processing,
- managing of refugee/asylum claims,
- visa policy coordination,
- air preclearance,
- advance passenger information/passenger name record,
- joint passenger analysis units,
- maritime security and ferry terminals,
- compatible immigration databases,
- immigration officers overseas,
- international cooperation,
- clearance away from the border,
- joint facilities,
- infrastructure improvements,
- critical infrastructure protection,
- integrated border and marine enforcement teams,
- joint enforcement coordination,
- integrated intelligence,
- fingerprints,
- removal of deportees,
- counter-terrorism legislation,
- joint training and exercises.[6]

President Bush and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien met in the fall of 2002 to discuss progress on the Smart Border Action Plan and asked that they be "updated regularly on the work being done to modernize our common border." [7]

The Canada Border Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) was created by an order in council on December 12, 2003 and put into legislation as the *Canada Border Services Agency Act*, on November 3, 2005. The CBSA brings together the border services of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.[8]

The Harper Conservative government announced on August 31, 2006, "CBSA officers at land and marine Ports of Entry, as well as officers who perform enforcement functions inland, will be trained and equipped with side-arms." [9]

According to its website: The CBSA has a workforce of approximately 14,000 employees, including over 6,500 uniformed CBSA officers who provide services at approximately 1,200 points across Canada and at 39 international locations. It manages 117 land-border crossings and operates at 13 international airports. Officers carry out marine operations at major ports, the largest being Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver and at 27 rail sites.

The CBSA investigates, detects, and apprehends violators of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. It conducts investigations of national security cases, and organized crime groups. It represents the interests of the CBSA and Citizenship and Immigration Canada at Minister's Delegate, Immigration Division, Immigration Appeal Division, Refugee Protection Division, and Federal Court proceedings. It processes and examines international mail at three mail processing centres and administers more than 90 acts, regulations and international agreements, many on

behalf of other federal departments and agencies, the provinces and the territories.

As part of its responsibilities, the CBSA administers legislation that governs the admissibility of people, detains people who may pose a threat to Canada and removes people who are considered inadmissible to Canada.[10]

On August 10, 2018, iPolitics reported that Canadian refugee advocate groups, including the BC Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Research Librarians were calling for an independent review of the CBSA in response to the death of a 49-year-old Nigerian man following an altercation with CBSA officers while he was being deported. An altercation took place on board a KLM flight from Calgary to Amsterdam. This is not the first death of a foreign national facing deportation, according to the BC Civil Liberties Association, which says more than 14 foreign nationals have died in CBSA custody.[11]

Many consider the CBSA to employ repressive, dishonest and underhanded measures against asylum seekers. For example, refugees are sometimes summoned to appear on Saturdays for a hearing, often preventing them from showing up with legal counsel. If they become distraught upon learning that they will be deported, they are at times placed in detention as a flight risk. They are presented with the choice of purchasing their own airline ticket back home. If they cannot, the government purchases it for them at a much higher cost, with the CBSA informing them that if ever they wish to return to Canada, their debt must be cleared beforehand.

Notes

1. [Information Sharing Between Countries.](#)
2. "Radical change to Canadian asylum process wrong, unnecessary," Richard Goldman, *Montreal Gazette*, May 2, 2019.
3. [Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction Mandate Letter, August 28, 2018.](#)
4. ["Canada deemed U.S. a safe country for asylum seekers after internal review," Teresa Wright, Canadian Press, October 22, 2018.](#)
5. [The White House, U.S.-Canada Smart Border/30 Point Action Plan Update.](#)
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. [Order Transferring Certain Portions of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency to the Canada Border Services Agency, SI/2003-216, Canada \(Federal\) Statutes and Regulations SI/2003-216; Canada Border Services Agency Act.](#)
9. ["Prime Minister Harper announces initiatives to improve Canada's border security," August 31, 2006.](#)
10. [Canada Border Services Agency.](#)
11. [BC Civil Liberties Association Letter to Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, February 14, 2019.](#)

Aligning Workers' Lives with the Profit Motive and Vagaries of the Market Place

- Diane Johnston -



For years now, governments in Canada have played havoc with the lives of foreign workers by continuously changing the programs and regulations through which they seek to permanently settle in Canada. In Quebec, various governments have adopted regulatory amendments altering the number of points allotted for certain selection criteria and raised the points threshold applicants must meet to qualify for a Quebec Selection Certificate (CSQ) in order to apply for permanent residency. Those amendments, once adopted, take immediate effect and have been consistently applied retroactively to a backlog of thousands of application requests, despite the fact that those wishing to settle in Quebec spent time, money and a lot of painstaking effort in preparing their forms, certain they would qualify for residency.

Evidence of the inhuman government treatment became clearly known on February 19, 2018 when the Superior Court of Quebec authorized a class action against the Minister of Immigration and the Government of Quebec with regard to the Quebec Regular Skilled Worker Immigration Program. The authorized action alleged that the defendants were unjustly enriched, committed a tort, and acted in bad faith by refusing to offer to reimburse the application fees paid by those class members whose CSQ applications were doomed to failure as a result of amendments to the Regulation respecting the weighting applicable to the selection of foreign nationals.[1] A settlement agreement has since been reached and the Court will be hearing an application for approval on June 19.

Before the June Court hearing, on February 7, Quebec Immigration Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette introduced Bill 9, an act the government fraudulently said is "to increase Quebec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration." The proposed legislation would allow the Minister to "impose conditions on the foreign national which affect the permanent residence granted under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*," to ensure, among other things, "the meeting of regional and sectoral labour needs, the regional or sectoral creation of enterprises or the financing of such enterprises, or the foreign national's linguistic, social or economic integration."

As part of the government's development of "reception, francization and integration programs"

for immigrants, foreign workers would be forced to learn about and be tested on so-called democratic and Quebec values as a condition for permanent residency. This violates the right to conscience in as much as applicants must either agree to imposed values or fail the "test." Quebec citizens are not required to swear allegiance to values at this point in time and dividing the polity on this basis is unacceptable. Only the people themselves can express their values, which can certainly not be defined and imposed by those who, without the consent of the people, claim to act in their name.

Through Section 20 of the proposed legislation, the Legault government is attempting to terminate a backlog of some 18,000 CSQ applications filed before August 2, 2018 under the Regular Skilled Worker Program, if on February 7, the date of the bill's introduction, the Minister had not yet made a selection, refusal or rejection decision on the application. As if this provides redress for playing with people's lives, the legislation says "Any required fees paid by an applicant having filed such an application must be returned, without interest, to the applicant." The same section also stipulates that "No damages or indemnity may be claimed from the Government, the Minister or any of their subordinates or mandataries in connection with such an application."^[2]

To counter the Legault government's move to stop handling the backlog of CSQ applications, the Association québécoise des avocats et avocates en droit de l'immigration (AQAADI), which includes some 250 immigration lawyers, filed an application for an injunction with the Superior Court of Quebec. They argue that Quebec's Immigration Minister "acted illegally in suspending the handling of the pending Regular Skilled Worker Program (RSWP) applications" for a CSQ. They also argued that the decision "jeopardized the immigration plans of tens of thousands of candidates, close to 6,000 of whom are already living in Quebec." They sought the injunction to "direct" the Minister to immediately resume evaluating the applications. AQAADI also argued that the Minister has no discretionary power or other statutory authority to refuse to handle the backlog of CSQ applications. "Far from it -- the refusal ensues solely from the premature application of a bill that has not yet been adopted by the National Assembly and therefore has no binding force."

On February 25, the Superior Court of Quebec issued a provisional interlocutory injunction ordering the Minister of Immigration to continue handling the backlog of 18,000 CSQ applications. In response to that order, Immigration Minister Jolin-Barrette released a statement declaring that his ministry "will respect the decision of the Superior Court of Quebec. The Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness will continue to handle and take decisions relating to applications for a [QSCs] within the framework of the Regular Skilled Worker Program until the adoption of the bill."

The bill is expected to be adopted before the National Assembly's summer recess in mid-June, which once again means that the files of thousands of CSQ applicants could be permanently terminated, with no legal recourse afforded them. This inhumanity is becoming increasingly intolerable. No society can afford to permit such things as governments which act with impunity in the name of the rule of law.

Notes

1. [Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness](#).
2. Quebec National Assembly website, Bill 9, *An Act to increase Quebec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration*.

Live-In Caregivers Speak Out Against Arbitrary Quebec Government Measures



A press conference took place in Montreal on May 5 with a group of foreign domestic workers, whose access to permanent residence has been affected by Bill 9, *An Act to increase Québec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration*. According to the Centre for Immigrant Workers, which organized the press conference, more than 80 women who came to Quebec under the Live-In Caregiver Program have come forward to say they fear for their future because of the bill.

Although these workers came to Quebec as part of the federal government's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), the specific program they fall under differs from others with regard to applying for permanent residence. Persons admitted under their program are able to apply for permanent residence after a few years of service under the Regular Skilled Worker Program (RSWP).

All these workers began the process to obtain permanent residency. And although it has been some time since the federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) sent them a letter acknowledging that they meet permanent residence eligibility requirements, their Quebec application has been either suspended or delayed by Bill 9.



The Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness (MIDI) stopped sending out Quebec Selection Certificate (CSQ) application forms in December 2018. Those who had already submitted a CSQ application received an email from MIDI on February 7, the date Bill 9 was introduced in the National Assembly, informing them that the handling of their applications had been suspended. An injunction issued by the Superior Court of Quebec then forced MIDI to

continue processing a backlog of 18,000 CSQ applications. However, it was only after a complaint was lodged that some of these domestic workers were sent the documents they required to apply for a CSQ. As things presently stand, some have received a CSQ application form for themselves as the principal applicant but not for their family members, while others who applied have received no CSQ application form.

"We have been in Quebec for at least four years and have worked hard for Quebec families, children and seniors. We want to remain here with our families and continue to contribute to the society," said Jennifer Rentiquiano. "The stress and anxiety this is causing us is unjust after having fulfilled all our obligations in becoming new immigrants to Quebec," she added.

"Everyone, the agencies and government of Canada personnel told us we would be able to obtain permanent residency and I did everything I had to do. I am scheduled to give birth in July and am worried about my status. Without being guaranteed status, what can I do for my child?" asked Genie Zonoria Tagalogon. Many others have children in the Philippines waiting to join their mothers whom they have not seen for years.

"We are the only source of revenue for our family in our country of origin. We have received the letter of eligibility from the Canadian government. We worked hard while hoping that we would be able to remain in the country. We are now faced with the unexpected news that our applications have been suspended," said Baby Aurea Santos Albay.

Jasmin de Calzada, a representative of the Filipino Women's Organization of Quebec (PINAY), noted that "Since the beginning of the 20th century, Canada has largely relied on migrant workers to provide care for families, particularly children. These workers came to Canada and worked hard in the hope of a better future for their children."



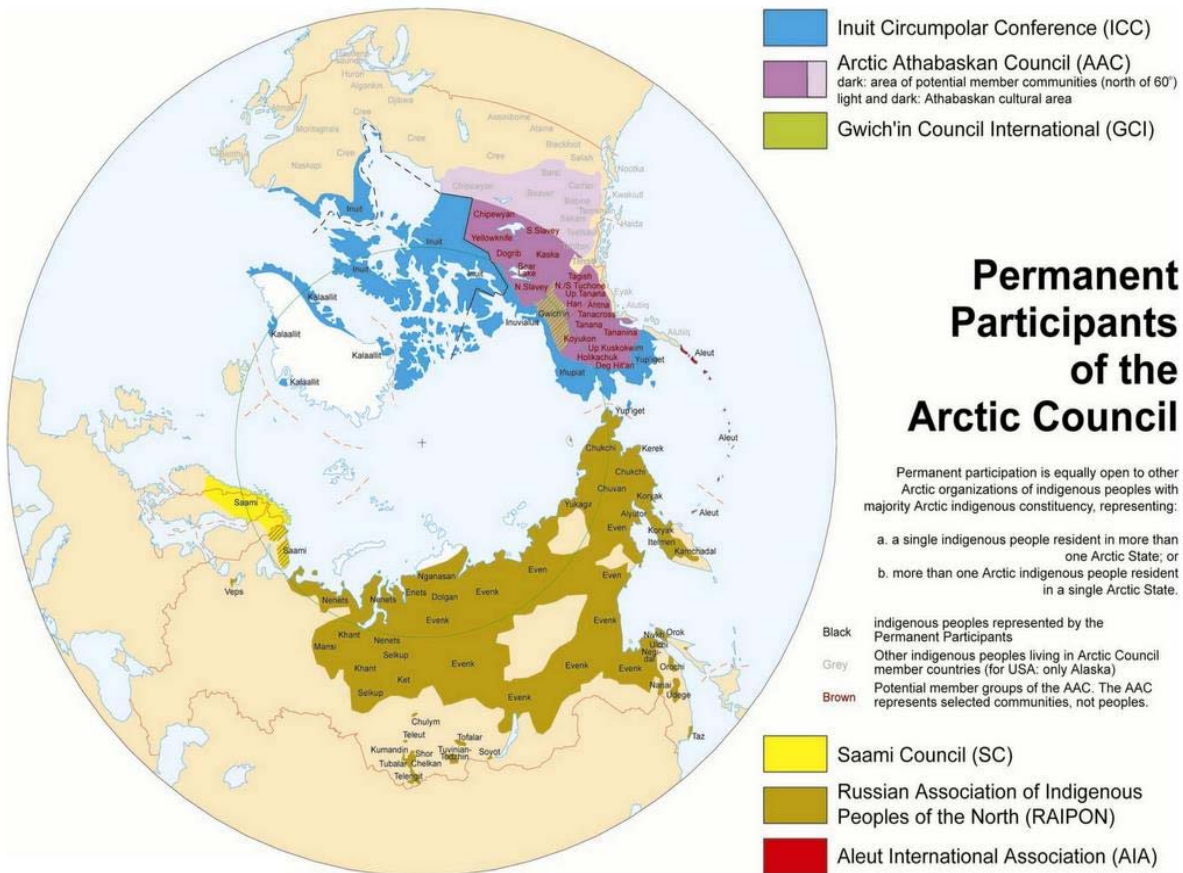
(Sources: Immigrant Workers Centre, CTV News. Photos: PINAY.)



**All Out to Humanize the Natural and Social Environment and
Make Canada a Zone for Peace**

U.S. Must Be Held to Account for Its Disruption of Arctic Council Meeting

- Peter Ewart -



courtesy of Norwegian Polar Institute/W.K. Dallmann [4]

Published research shows that climate change is bringing about the end of the Arctic as we know it due to rising temperatures, melting ice, changing snow cover, and disappearing permafrost. Since 1971, eight trillion metric tonnes of land ice have been lost across the Arctic causing sea levels around the world to rise and producing enough mass to tip the axis of the earth. As one researcher says, the "Arctic biophysical system [is] now clearly trending away from its 20th century state and into an unprecedented state."

Despite the concerns of humankind about how to humanize the natural and social environment to take matters in hand, a day before the 11th Arctic Council Ministerial meeting, held this year in Rovaniemi, Finland on May 7, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivered a grandstanding 20-minute warmongering speech designed to ignore the problem of climate change and establish U.S. hegemony instead. Pompeo blasted China and Russia and what he characterized as their predatory intentions in the Arctic. He took the opportunity to unequivocally state that Canada's claim to the Northwest Passage is "illegitimate."

In his speech, Pompeo stated that the Arctic has become "an arena for power and competition" and is "rapidly taking on new strategic significance." Specifically, he noted how China is

connecting Russia's Northern Sea Route to its "Maritime Silk Road." According to Pompeo, Beijing "could use its civilian research presence [...] to strengthen its military presence" and has a pattern of "aggressive behaviour elsewhere." Furthermore, he questioned Beijing's characterization of itself as "a near-Arctic state," arguing that "no third category exists and claiming otherwise entitles China to exactly nothing."

In regards to Russia, he criticized its claim to what he termed "the international waters of the Northern Sea Route" and the increase of its military presence in the region, charging that "Russian territorial ambitions can turn violent."

While Pompeo spoke enthusiastically about all the opportunities that the melting ice was opening up for shipping and resource extraction, he said nothing about the downside of a rapidly warming Arctic. For instance, he said nothing about the ramping up of global warming as a result of vast areas of the region formerly covered with ice and snow no longer reflecting the rays of the sun, but instead absorbing the solar radiation. Or that, as the permafrost melts, huge clouds of methane, a greenhouse gas, will be released into the atmosphere. Or that weather patterns will be profoundly affected in the rest of the world because of changes in the jet stream and ocean currents. Pompeo's comments coincided with the release of a UN report that estimates a million species on earth are at risk of extinction as a result, in part, of climate change.

Arctic Council meetings strive to be collegial. Held on a biennial basis, representatives from the eight Arctic countries and six Indigenous participant organizations deliberate on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection. The emphasis is on finding ways to work together on common issues.^[1] It is considered poor form to bully pulpit prior to the convening of the meeting.

Arctic Council delegates were stunned by Pompeo's comments, news reports indicate. China has observer status at the Arctic Council and the head of the Chinese delegation, Gao Feng, commented that Pompeo's speech "left him floored." He further said that "the business of the Arctic Council is cooperation, environmental protection, friendly consultation and the sharing and exchange of views," which the U.S. Secretary of State's speech completely contradicted.

"China will not interfere in the affairs that purely belong to the Arctic countries," Gao said, adding that China has always adhered to the principle of openness, cooperation and mutual benefits while taking part in Arctic affairs.

"On the Arctic issue, China has always stressed the importance of scientific research, advocate environmental conservation, reasonable utilization, law-based governance and international cooperation," he said. "We are neither playing a geopolitical game nor making an exclusive small circle."

China is willing to work with all sides to contribute to the peace, tranquility and sustainable development in the Arctic, Gao said, adding that the criticisms made by the U.S. official "were totally incorrect" and "had ulterior motives."

Lassi Heininen, from Finland's University of Helsinki noted that typically, in the past, all the attending parties have worked to establish a good atmosphere because of common interests. He questioned why Pompeo had acted so aggressively against China and Russia, noting that both "the content and timing of the speech were unheard of at Arctic Council Ministerial meetings, where traditionally, no one state or minister tries to 'steal the show.'" Heininen added that he hoped that Pompeo's intervention did not "open a new kind of use of the Arctic Council, or misuse of it, for other purposes."

Michael Byers, an Arctic expert from the University of British Columbia, characterized Pompeo's remarks as "belligerent" and containing numerous false statements. For example, Pompeo complained about Chinese investments in Canadian Arctic infrastructure but such investment is actually non-existent.

One of the most alarming things that happened at the Arctic Council meeting was that, for the first time since it was formed in 1996, the Council was unable to come up with a joint declaration, the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper reported. The reason was that the U.S. side blocked any declaration that contained the words "climate change," despite opposition from participants in the meeting. Instead, due to a lack of consensus about what to say on climate change, Finland's Foreign Minister Timo Soini issued a detailed chair's statement -- the first such document in the Arctic Council's history, *Nunatsiaq News* reports. In it, Soini refers to "a majority of us" around the Arctic Council table, who supported clauses and issues involving climate change, such as the need to reduce greenhouse gas and black carbon emissions and to work on climate change adaptation.[2]

At the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2017, the U.S. actually did sign onto a declaration that "clearly cited the effects of climate change in the Arctic and the need for action at all levels," one media report indicates. The U.S. government has given no explanation as to why Pompeo has directly contradicted this earlier agreement. However, at a press conference, Pompeo said the Trump administration shares "a deep commitment to environmental stewardship" but wouldn't sign on to collective goals like those on black carbon emissions, which, he claimed, accelerate warming in the Arctic. In that regard, the Secretary of State even appears to be out of sync with his own military which categorizes the changing weather and mounting temperatures as "a threat to national security." The fact is Pompeo waxed enthusiastically about the opportunity provided by the melting ice of the Arctic for shipping and resource extraction, but refused to acknowledge why the ice was melting or even utter the words "climate change" during the proceedings.

Indigenous representatives condemned the U.S. statements and actions, and especially the U.S. blocking of the final joint declaration over the issue of climate change. Dalee Sambo Dorrough, international chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, called the U.S. actions a lack of leadership and a "moral failure" that represents a serious blow to "the future of what is supposed to be a consensus based body."

She further commented "Inuit are feeling the effects of climate change every day. While the U.S. government concerns itself with semantics, playing games with words, our people are witnessing the adverse impacts of climate change. What about us and our reality?"

Jimmy Stotts, President of Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska, clearly referring to the U.S., said it's time to stop "hiding from reality" and acknowledge that climate change is real, and that mankind is responsible for much of it. "We don't understand those who would argue otherwise," Stotts said. "We believe it's time to stop bickering to survive."

Stotts also suggested a greater focus by the Arctic Council on other key issues for Arctic Indigenous peoples, such as wildlife management, food security, infrastructure deficits, environmental issues and "the horror of suicide," *Nunatsiaq News* reported. He urged the Arctic Council to get back to its original idea, that of finding a balance between development and conservation, the news report said.

All Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland had to say to back up her claim that her government supports the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic was that Canada "plans to earmark more than \$28 million to -- among other things -- support an Arctic Council sustainable

development working group secretariat, to provide continued assistance for Indigenous groups so they can participate in the Arctic Council and to help UArctic, a university network with members around the circumpolar world." She referred to a recent federal government report on climate change that said temperatures in the Arctic could rise by 11 degrees Celsius, as "terrifying." Nothing was said to hold the U.S. to account for disrupting the ministerial meeting or its stand that Canada's claim to the Northwest Passage is "illegitimate."

The result was that the eight Arctic nations ended up signing a one-page ministerial statement which contained no mention of climate change and which the six Indigenous participant organizations refused to endorse. According to the document, which is on the Arctic Council's website, the ministers reaffirmed their "commitment to maintain peace, stability and constructive cooperation in the Arctic," emphasized "the role of Arctic states in providing leadership in addressing new opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, working in close cooperation with the Permanent Participants," recognized "the right of Arctic indigenous peoples and the unique role of Permanent Participants within the Arctic Council, as well as the commitment to consult and cooperate in good faith with Arctic indigenous peoples and support their meaningful engagement in Arctic Council activities." In addition, it welcomed "the ongoing strategic work" and instructed "the Senior Arctic Officials to continue strategic planning in order to provide guidance and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arctic Council and to report to Ministers in 2021."

The peoples who live in the Arctic have the full support of the peoples of the countries which are within the Arctic Circle. There is widespread worldwide support for the stand of the peoples of the Arctic to make the Arctic a zone of peace and to deal with climate change and the other very serious issues facing them. The U.S. striving for hegemony over the Arctic, its warmongering and attacks against China and Russia and denial of Canadian claims over the Northwest Passage require opposition on the part of Canada if it is to even survive as a nation within the current dangerous international climate.[3]

The chairmanship of the Arctic Council now goes to Iceland for the next two years. Iceland last hosted the Arctic Council from 2002 to 2004.

"Active dialogue based on scientific research and dynamic collaboration between our countries and organizations is the best way forward for the Arctic Council," said Iceland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson before receiving the chairmanship gavel from Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Timo Soini.

Notes

1. The Arctic Council was established in 1996 to promote cooperation between the Arctic countries, particularly in the environment protection area. Member states include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.
2. For the complete text of the statement made by Arctic Council Chair, Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini, [click here](#).
3. See also these articles:

"Collusion and Contention Over the Arctic: Trudeau Government Moves to Militarize the Arctic," Peter Ewart, *TML Weekly*, April 6, 2019

"Northwest Passage Dispute," *TML Weekly*, April 6, 2019

"The Inuit and the Struggle for an Arctic Zone of Peace," *TML Weekly*, April 6, 2019

"The Arctic -- An Overview," *TML Weekly*, April 6, 2019

"Arctic Council and the Military Issue," *TML Weekly*, April 6, 2019

(With files from Arctic Council, Nunatsiaq News, Eye on the Arctic/Radio Canada International, CBC News, The Guardian, Helsingin Sanomat, U.S. Department of State, TASS, Xinhua)



Canada and the International Rule of Law

Canadian Network On Cuba Calls on Ottawa to Reopen Visa Office in Cuba

- Isaac Saney, Spokesperson -

The Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) is deeply concerned by Ottawa's abrupt decision to shut down the section of its Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC) Office in Havana through which visas were processed for Cuban citizens wishing to visit Canada and those seeking work or study permits. This measure follows the 50 per cent reduction of the staff of Canada's embassy in Cuba which took place in January of this year. Cubans now have to make their applications through a visa application centre in a third country (the nearest being Mexico). Those having to submit their biometrics (photo and fingerprints), a requirement instituted in 2018 that will apply to most, will have to travel to a centre outside of Cuba to record this information.

These decisions have introduced unreasonable delays and significant financial obstacles for those Cubans seeking to travel to Canada and will, amongst other things, cause significant damage to business, cultural, scientific and sporting relations. Indeed, they have already had a drastic impact on academic exchanges between Canada and Cuba with some of the Cuban academics scheduled to attend the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies on May 10-12 not able to procure visas.

Canada and Cuba have enjoyed uninterrupted diplomatic relations since 1945. This development represents a serious departure from the relations which have existed all those years. Canada, along with Mexico, refused to break diplomatic relations with Cuba in the 1960s when the United States established the all-sided blockade it has maintained since then. At that time the U.S. demanded that all members of the Organization of American States (OAS) sever any connection with Cuba and, even though Canada was not a member of the OAS at that time, it still did not follow suit.



One wonders what crime Cuba has committed against Canada to make Canada take what can only amount to hostile actions against Cuba? Why now, at a time the U.S. has reversed the Obama government's attempts to bring an end to the failed policy that Washington has maintained against Cuba for 60 years?

In 2014, the world rejoiced to see the restoration of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba and held out great hopes that relations between the two countries would be normalized. Canada helped by providing a venue for the talks which led to the improvement of those relations.

Everyone knows that sanctions target the people and deprive them of food, medicines and normalcy in the conduct of elemental commercial, financial and other relations. For 27 years, the vast majority of countries of the world have overwhelmingly rejected the U.S. all-sided economic war against Cuba. In 2018 alone, 189 countries voted with Cuba to end the blockade and only two voted against, of which one was the U.S. itself.



And now this! Is Canada so attracted to the Trump administration's anti-democratic counter-revolutionary attacks against Venezuela's right to self-determination as to take its revenge on Cuba? Or is it poised to admit that the United States dictates Canadian policy? Shame on Canada either way.

Who will benefit from the closing of the Havana visa service? Not Cubans trying to have normal relations with Canada and Canadians. What wrong has Cuba ever done to Canada?

The CNC calls on the Canadian government to reinstate the discontinued services at the IRCC Office in Havana, so that visa processing may proceed in a reasonable manner. If the abrupt shutdown is simply the result of the lack of necessary staff, as the Ministry of Global Affairs asserts, then Ottawa should issue a clear statement that visa and other related operations will resume once staffing issues are resolved.

Canadians, thousands upon thousands of whom visit Cuba for many reasons including tourism, business, academic, political and cultural exchanges of all kinds, want Ottawa to pursue a foreign policy based on mutual respect and equality. The CNC is confident that Canadians will reject any course of action taken by Ottawa which undermines the long-standing diplomatic relations based on norms recognized by the international rule of law and the ties of friendship and solidarity that exist between the peoples of our two countries.

(May 10, 2019)



Huawei Statement Following Meng Wanzhou Case Management Hearing

On May 8, a Huawei executive issued a statement on the steps of the BC Supreme Court following the latest hearing regarding the Meng Wanzhou extradition case.

Benjamin Howes, Vice President of Media Affairs at Huawei said:

"From the outset, Huawei has expressed confidence in Ms. Meng's innocence. We have maintained that her U.S.-ordered arrest was an unlawful abuse of process -- one guided by political considerations and tactics, not by the rule of law.

"Today in court, lawyers for Ms. Meng made three new and important disclosures.

"First, the criminal case against Ms. Meng is based on allegations that are simply not true. To the contrary, it was made clear in court today that business activities by Ms. Meng were conducted openly and transparently with full knowledge of banking officials. The lawyers noted in court today that the PowerPoint presented was not misleading, the bank had knowledge of the nature of Skycom's business and operations in Iran, and the bank understood the relationship between Huawei and Skycom. Therefore, no evidence to prove that Meng committed acts of "deceit, dishonesty, or other fraudulent means" or the bank was placed at a risk of deprivation by relying on Meng's Presentation.

"Second, it was revealed that actions directed in part by the FBI led to serious and repeated violations of Ms. Meng's rights under the *Charter*. According to the evidence disclosed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) of Canada, the arrest of Meng at the airport was a coordinated effort of three departments: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and the FBI. The RCMP intentionally delayed the presentation of the arrest warrant in order to carry out unlawful detention and search against Meng under the pretense of a routine border check. Her luggage was searched. Her cellphone and other electronic devices were seized at the direction of the FBI -- and she was compelled to reveal her passwords. More key evidence regarding this case remains in the hands of the RCMP, the CBSA and the DOJ. Ms. Meng will apply to the court, asking the RCMP, CBSA, and DOJ to disclose more evidence on this matter.

"Third, it was revealed that the arrest of Ms. Meng violated a core principle of the Canada-U.S. Extradition Treaty and Canadian extradition law -- because the allegation she faces is not a crime in Canada. The U.S. allegations against Meng are based on violations of U.S. sanctions against Iran. However, Canada does not impose sanctions on financial services in relation to Iran. Therefore, the extradition request does not satisfy the double criminality requirement.

"Furthermore, it was stated that political factors at play during the extradition process may lead to a serious violation of justice. Ms. Meng's legitimate rights may also be harmed. Thus Ms. Meng intends to apply to this Court for a stay of the extradition proceedings.

"Canadians value the rule of law -- and the *Charter of Rights*. Law enforcement officials are expected to follow the rules at all times, in all cases and for all people -- citizens and visitors alike.

"We have trust in the Canadian judicial process -- and we look forward to seeing Ms. Meng's freedom restored."

Standing Up for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in the United States

Students and Workers Oppose Escalation of Trump Administration Attacks

- Voice of Revolution -



Students at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, organized a month-long sit-in demanding the university end all contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and use the funds instead for an immigrant defence fund. They also made the connection between ICE repression in their communities and a university plan to have a private armed police force. As their chants brought out, *No Justice, No Peace, No Armed Police! No Justice, No Peace, No ICE in Our Streets!* Communities in Wisconsin, Arizona and elsewhere are also taking their stand against detention centres and for the rights of migrant families. As well, asylum officers -- civil servants who are distinct from ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and not an armed force -- are speaking out against new protocols that are forcing people with legitimate claims and fears back to Mexico. Many May Day actions also stood up for immigrant and refugee rights, including the right to driver's licences and other basic requirements of daily life. All are standing up for rights and for a rule of law that actually functions to the benefit of the people.

Contending with this growing resistance, the Office of the President is acting to further attack rights and eliminate rule of law. In yet another presidential memorandum, Trump is acting to block asylum seekers from obtaining work permits. Given that the processing of asylum claims commonly takes at least six months and sometimes years, given the current backlog, this is an effort to starve people out even though they have committed no crime and have the right to asylum. He is also demanding that a fee be charged simply to apply, which would turn a right into a privilege for those with sufficient funds.

In addition, Trump is demanding that all cases be adjudicated within 180 days. This is yet another attack on immigration judges, who are already under quotas. Judges have spoken out against these measures, saying it is robbing them of their discretion and authority as judges to decide cases. Forcing faster trials also undermines the ability of the migrants involved to secure lawyers and prepare their cases. Both these demands, and the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) issued in January, are undermining those judges and asylum officers trained in refugee law and acting to uphold it.

The memorandum directs Attorney General William P. Barr and Acting Homeland Security

Secretary Kevin McAleenan to propose regulations within 90 days that would enforce these demands. The memorandum states the goal is "to strengthen asylum procedures to safeguard our system against rampant abuse of our asylum process." There is no evidence any such abuse exists. It is the case that a large number of families are being forced to leave their homes as their countries are engulfed in anarchy and violence as a result of U.S. interference of various kinds, especially in Honduras and El Salvador, where most migrants are currently coming from. Thus more than 103,000 migrants crossed the U.S.-Mexico border last month, the highest level in more than a decade. About 60 per cent were Central American parents travelling with children who, upon arrival on U.S. soil, wherever they crossed, have the right to asylum.

While there is no evidence the migrants are abusing the system, something confirmed by judges and asylum officers, there is abundant evidence that refugees are being unjustly criminalized and terrorized by the government -- with families being separated, mothers and children detained for long periods, minors being kept in cages and denied medical care such that children are dying while in the care of CBP and ICE and people with just claims being sent back to Mexico.

Trump and the government clearly have no solutions to the problems the U.S. state has created, both at home and abroad. They refuse to defend rights while systematically eliminating rule of law. Whether dealing with immigrants and refugees, with police killings and brutality, or with issues of war and peace, such as plans to now militarily invade Venezuela, the action taken is the use of police powers, of which presidential memorandums are one example. As further evidence of this, Trump is sending hundreds more troops to the border with Mexico and has extended their deployment indefinitely. Clearly there is a connection between imperialist war, potentially against Mexico as well as Venezuela, and the repression of ICE and armed police at home. A government with no solutions and which refuses to modernize its institutions can only rely on use of force.

As the growing resistance indicates, defending the rights of all is crucial at this time. A common aim for these struggles, both against U.S. wars and interference and for rights, is an anti-war government. An anti-war government upholds the rights of all at home and abroad, brings all U.S. troops home, and stands against war, interference and the genocide of police and military killings. An anti-war government recognizes that democracy today requires the people themselves to be empowered to decide these vital issues and ensure that positive relations are developed that serve the interests of the people at home and abroad.

(Photos: VOR)

Johns Hopkins Students Demand End to ICE Contracts, No Armed Police on Campus

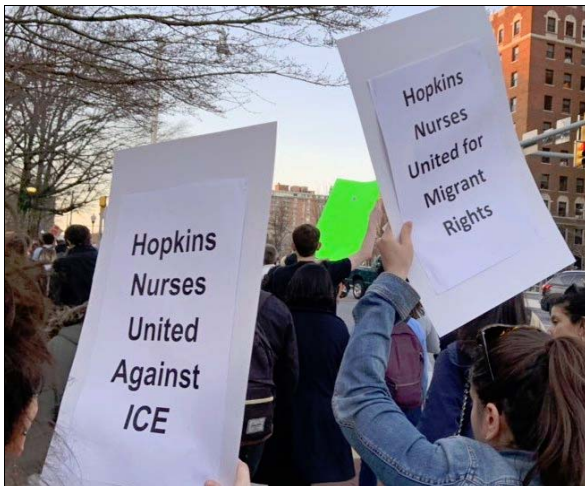
Students at Johns Hopkins University organized a month-long sit-in of their campus administration building, Garland Hall, to stand against the university's plans for an armed campus police force and its contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). They demanded the cancellation of ICE contracts, set to expire this year, and a pledge that all money generated by previous contracts, about \$1.7 million, would be donated to an immigration defence fund. Students firmly rejected detention of asylum seekers and criminalization of immigrants and demanded that their university play no part in such crimes. Throughout the month-long sit-in the voice of students could be heard loud and clear, "No Armed Police on Campus! No ICE Contracts!"

One organizer of the sit-in explained, "Very dangerous state legislation has just passed, granting this university, which is a repeat offender in terms of crimes against Baltimore city residents, with

police power. Seventy-five percent of the students at Johns Hopkins said they did not want the police force. Several community associations, primarily across Baltimore, also said that they did not want this armed force.



"There was a letter written by 100 faculty members to the administration who also said they wanted to disarm, de-escalate, de-fund this machine of force that was going to happen. They called for other solutions and investment and things like mediation and community-driven alternatives to policing. As a public health institution, Johns Hopkins University knows better and knows that more policing does not equate with less crime, but that more policing actually causes more anxiety and public health concerns around communities, causes the extraction of wealth from communities and also normalizes state-sanctioned violence and terror against black and brown bodies across the U.S."



The faculty passed a unanimous resolution in support of the students. Community support grew over the course of the sit-in, with community organizations and church groups visiting students and publicly expressing their support. With this support, the students raised more than \$2,700 for food and other necessities.

President Daniels repeatedly refused to meet with students about their concerns unless they left the administration building. Instead, students put leaflets and banners up and organized meetings and various events to inform their fellow students and all concerned about the need

to block an armed police force on campus and to reject any relations with ICE. They made a clear connection between the use of force against immigrants at the border with Mexico and use of force against students, especially minorities, who are routinely brutalized and profiled. Baltimore police are already known for their killing of unarmed African Americans. Students have no doubt a private armed police force on campus, unaccountable to the public, would be even worse.

They pointed to the on-going struggle in Baltimore for justice for Tyrone West, an African American killed by police from Morgan State University in July 2013. Morgan State's private armed force is being used by Johns Hopkins as the model for its force. Students and the community are also well aware that in the last several years, campus police officers have used racist profiling and force in handling incidents, including those involving students with mental health issues. These are warranted concerns in light of an incident in April where an African American couple, unarmed and fully compliant during a traffic stop, were shot and injured by police, including an officer from Yale's police department.

Students rejected the administration claims that armed police would make the campus more safe. Many women students said investigating sexual assaults on campus, for example, would do a lot more to provide for the safety of students.

The university also threatened students with disciplinary actions. They refused to put anything in writing in regard to the concerns raised, but did create a paper trail for "violations" by the students, "to pursue disciplinary actions against students as soon as the sit-in is over," as one organizer put it. "We've heard reports that the Dean's Office has been calling faculty members, especially faculty members who are in more precarious positions, and threatening them, to discourage them from supporting the sit-in," the student said. Anyone who is stepping in the space is also being pursued and surveilled in these ways, which is extremely alarming and which actually gives credibility to our concerns about what Hopkins would do with its own private, armed police force on campus and beyond and in the community."

The administration also refused a student and faculty proposal for mediation to address their concerns and resolve the problems. It also rejected calls from students and faculty for more public meetings so that people in the community could voice their concerns about ICE, police profiling and killings, and alternatives to use of force.

On May 1, after weeks of the administration's refusals to meet, the students shut down Garland Hall, chaining the doors shut and chaining themselves to railings and staircases inside. They left open the door to the president's office. Posters and leaflets were put up on the windows and doors throughout the building, detailing their concerns. A large banner on the staircase read, "No private police. No ICE contracts. Justice for Tyrone West."



On May 5, President Daniels said he would meet with students, but only outside the building, which most saw as a ploy to demobilize them. Students called for a neutral, mutually agreed-upon mediator to conduct the negotiations. They demanded that students, professors and staff who participated in the protests not be punished, and to be let back into the building and not be arrested if the talks went awry.

Daniels refused and called in the police to clear the building. A force of more than 80 police descended on the building. Seven students were arrested. As they were forced out, students' militant chants made clear they will continue to fight.

(Voice of Revolution. Photos: Struggle-La Lucha, Students Against Private Police, J. Noor, B. Soderberg)

Wisconsin Community Rejects Private Detention Centre

Community opposition to plans for the first privately run immigration detention centre in Wisconsin has resulted in the proposal, in the works for the past year, being withdrawn in May. Virginia-based Immigration Centers of America had wanted to build a 500-bed detention centre it claimed would generate more than 200 full-time jobs and millions of dollars in state and local tax revenue.

The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* reports that companies that build such centres are being encouraged by federal officials, but resisted at the state and local levels. The newspaper reported:

"Public outcry over the plan was fierce, with residents opposing the detention of immigrants, and expressing concerns about use of tax dollars and property values. The city's staff had issued a report recommending officials reject the application for rezoning and related ordinance changes, saying the project did not fit in the city's development plan.

"After the St. Croix plans were made public in early April, a wave of public rejection spread through the area. St. Croix County Supervisor Daniel Hansen, who represents some New Richmond wards, was one of the first to organize opposition against the center. He said he believes it is immoral to incarcerate those who are fleeing their country and trying to seek refuge in the U.S."

"I feel it's inhumane to treat an asylum-seeker like a criminal," Hansen said. He contacted advocacy groups, ordered signs opposing the project and prepared a list of reasons why he thought the project would be bad for the city. He knocked on doors, called friends and reached out to others to build a campaign. He said both Democrats and Republicans were against the project.

Other groups in Wisconsin also organized to stop the project, including the American Civil Liberties Union-Wisconsin and immigrant advocacy group Voces de la Frontera. "This is a for-profit business that is making money out of discrimination and breaking up families and our economy," said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera. "This has no place in Wisconsin."

New Richmond Alderwoman Scottie Ard lost count of the number of calls she received opposing the project, adding, "Most of the callers had not only a moral objection to a detention center, but they also have the objection that this is not what we want our community to be known for."

The number of those being detained by ICE has rapidly increased since fiscal year 2016, when ICE held an average of 34,376 immigrants on any given day. The average for this fiscal year, as of March, was 45,155, said ICE spokeswoman Nicole Alberico.

Nonetheless, the *Journal-Sentinel* points out, that "even in counties like St. Croix that voted for Donald Trump, [...] plans have not worked out. Immigration Centers of America, which owns a detention facility in Virginia, also has been trying to secure two multimillion-dollar federal contracts to open detention centers in Illinois and Michigan.

"The company has run into opposition there, too.

"Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer canceled earlier this year the sale of a shuttered state prison in Ionia that the company hoped to use as a detention center, saying the company could not guarantee it would not be holding adults separated from their children at the border. [Immigration Centres of America] spokesman John Truscott said the company is looking at other options near Detroit.

"In Illinois, the Village of Dwight board voted in favor of the company's request to annex a property where they plan to build a 1,200-bed immigration detention center in March despite the opposition of immigrant advocates. But the plan may yet be blocked, as state lawmakers are pushing for legislation banning private detention centers. The bill passed the Illinois House in early April."

Fred Tsao, with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrants and Refugee Rights, said immigrant detention is cruel and unnecessary. "One can make a detention facility as nice as you can, but it's still a jail, it's still a prison," he said.

(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

Phoenix Organizes to House Migrant Families

Phoenix, Arizona is one of the main cities where Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are releasing migrant families awaiting asylum claims, often with no food or water. Sometimes the families, many with young children, are just dumped at the bus station and left to fend for themselves. Many people in Phoenix active in defending the migrant families felt this was a way to further terrorize the families while overwhelming those organizing against detentions and deportations and for the right to asylum. But the Phoenix community responded by stepping up their efforts, organizing a wide network of 30 churches and other facilities to house and feed about 1,400 migrants a week, many of them families with young children. Generally, families released in Phoenix only stay about a week until transportation is available to reach their sponsors or family members in other cities.

Recently, in what appears to be a direct effort by CBP and ICE to undermine the organizing efforts, many migrant families are now being released in nearby Yuma. Yuma is a city of about 100,000, with one migrant shelter housing 200 people. Officials there were told the shelter was only to serve as an "overflow" for migrants who could not be released at shelters in Phoenix.

Since October, the Border Patrol had been transferring migrant families detained in Yuma to ICE, which then transported them to Phoenix. But at the end of March, the arrangement suddenly changed and CBP began transferring fewer families to ICE custody and instead began releasing them in Yuma.

In April, Yuma Mayor Douglas Nicholls was forced to declare a state of emergency to deal with the flood of migrant families being released by CBP. Meanwhile, Phoenix saw a significant decrease in families and the hundreds of beds available were going empty. Organizers say the government is purposely creating chaos and striving to make conditions more difficult for migrants and communities alike.



Another example involves St. Vincent De Paul in Phoenix. In late March, the church agreed to let ICE release up to 100 migrants daily at one of its dining halls to provide a safe place for them to stay during the day until they could be driven to local churches to spend the night. The opening of the dining hall was intended to prevent ICE from dumping large groups of migrant families at the Greyhound bus station, or on the street, as the agency had done on several occasions before the network of churches had been developed.

But just two days after the St. Vincent De Paul dining hall opened to migrant families, the CBP announced it had started releasing migrant families in Yuma instead. CBP is also releasing families in Blythe, a city of only about 20,000 on the Arizona line. They are doing so even though many of the migrant families released in Yuma and Blythe are headed to cities in Eastern states, and must pass through Phoenix anyway. Yet CBP and ICE are organizing to not bring them to Phoenix.

Data provided by Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, one of the main defenders of migrant families in Phoenix, shows that during the 11-day period from April 14 to April 25, the number of migrants released by ICE in Phoenix fluctuated between 50 and 234 daily. On all but one day during that period, the number of migrants released by ICE fell far below capacity at the nearly 30 churches currently providing shelter on a rotating basis.

For example, on April 25, ICE released 70 migrants in Phoenix on a day when the capacity at local churches was 220. So far this fiscal year, the Border Patrol has seen a 374 per cent increase in the number of migrant families arriving at the border compared to the same period last year, from 39,975 to 189,584, according to CBP data.

In the Border Patrol's Yuma sector, apprehensions of migrant families have increased 273 per cent so far this fiscal year, from 6,487 to 24,194, the data shows. ICE released 153,000 between December 21 and April 22, according to statistics provided by the agency. Of those, 26,700 were released by ICE in Arizona, 14,800 in San Diego area, 49,300 in El Paso area and 62,200 in the San Antonio area.

Immigrant rights organizers emphasize that migrant families are fleeing horrendous conditions in their home countries, often created by U.S. interference, and have a legal right to pursue their asylum case in the U.S. Many also feel ICE and CBP are acting in a manner to justify further attacks on migrant families and at the border more generally. "I think the broad goal in all of this is to create the impression that our country is under siege by refugees from Central America," said an attorney who is executive director of Refugee Aid. The Phoenix-based non-profit collects food, clothing and other necessities to distribute to migrants released by ICE and some volunteers also host migrant families in their homes.

Layal Rabat, a spokeswoman for the Phoenix Restoration Project, another community group helping migrant families, feels the Trump administration is intentionally creating chaos in border

communities to provide ammunition to attack the Flores agreement, a court-settlement that prevents the federal government from holding migrant families who ask for asylum for more than 20 days. She also worries that the Trump administration is trying to justify plans to build large detention facilities to hold migrant families indefinitely by creating chaos in border communities.

In Phoenix, as in El Paso, San Antonio, San Diego and many other cities contending with government attacks on migrant families, people are rejecting these efforts to justify further criminalization and dehumanizing of people and instead stepping up efforts to defend the rights of all.

Asylum Officers Speak Out Against Trump Program That Attacks Refugees

The Trump administration launched what it terms its Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program in January and has been expanding it ever since. MPP sends people seeking asylum back to Mexico to wait while their claim is processed through the immigration courts, something which commonly takes at least six months and often years. Previously, people would be released to family members already in the U.S. or sponsors like churches and community organizations. The program directly involves asylum officers, who are trained to determine if people seeking asylum have a reasonable fear of being persecuted, tortured or killed if they are returned to their own countries.

This corps of asylum officers is not an armed force and is distinct from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). One of their main jobs is to ensure the U.S. is upholding international and U.S. law concerning refugees. This includes the fundamental principle of refugee law called non-refoulement -- that a government must not send a migrant back to a country where they would be persecuted or imperilled.

Asylum officers are being forced to play a very different role under the MPP process. Trump's MPP program is eliminating these officers' discretion and creating difficulties for Central American asylum seekers, who, when rejected, are sent back to Mexico, not their home countries. Under these protocols, the Trump administration has started sending these asylum seekers back to Mexico after initial processing -- first a handful a week, then dozens, now hundreds -- with instructions to show up at a port of entry at a particular date for a hearing before an immigration judge on their asylum case. Lawyers and human rights advocates say there is no way for immigrants to obtain U.S. lawyers while in Mexico; that they may not be able to return to the U.S. in time for their hearings; that northern Mexico is not necessarily a safe place to be for Central Americans fleeing persecution; and thus the U.S. is violating the principle of non-refoulement.



Asylum officers are speaking out against MPP and the current process where their discretion is being eliminated and people with legitimate fears about staying in Mexico are being sent back. Many asylum officers think that their personal integrity and that of their office is at stake. They worry that they are being used to whitewash the program, and do not have as much power to allow migrants to stay in the U.S. if they are in danger as the Trump administration claims they do.

Under the new rules, officers effectively have no power to decide whether asylum seekers can stay in the U.S. to await an asylum hearing. One officer described the interviews as just for show. Another officer explained that he had listened to a Central American's story of threats from drug cartels during his journey through Mexico en route to the U.S., and believed the man's life was in danger. Yet under MPP he "wasn't even allowed to make an argument" that the asylum seeker should be allowed to stay in the U.S. to pursue his case.

Normally, after a screening interview, the officer summarizes the facts of the case and reads them back to the applicant. Then the officer writes up a legal analysis as to whether the interviewee is describing persecution (of a specific ethnicity, nationality, political opinion, religion, or "particular social group") or torture, and how likely it is that they would face such persecution or torture if returned to their home country. Typically the interviewee must show "credible fear" of torture or persecution, a standard designed to err on the side of non-refoulement. The officer submits the legal analysis with their final ruling on whether the interviewee should be allowed to avoid deportation and seek legal status in the U.S.

Under MPP, the traditional screening standards no longer apply. Instead, migrants have to show that they are "more likely than not" to face persecution in Mexico in order to be kept in the U.S. before their hearings. That is a higher standard than either "credible fear" or "reasonable fear" and not one which asylum officers are familiar with. The officers say that in practice, it is all but impossible for applicants to meet this standard. The legal standard requires such specific and persuasive testimony that no one can satisfy that burden, they say.

Moreover, as one officer put it, asylum seekers are "scared, unprepared, exhausted" -- and do not understand they could be sent back to Mexico. As well, CBP agents, typically the first U.S. immigration authorities that these asylum seekers encounter when they cross into the U.S., do not ask asylum seekers whether they are afraid of being returned to Mexico, and will only refer them to an asylum officer if they voluntarily mention they are afraid of return. CBP agents have told asylum officers that they are "instructed not to ask" about fear of return to Mexico. One CBP agent told an asylum officer, "We don't want to spoon-feed them" anything that would facilitate them seeking asylum.

Asylum officers said interviewees did not understand why they were being asked about Mexico and only stress that they are afraid of being returned to their home country. They seem to know far less about Mexico than the officers interviewing them, meaning they cannot give detailed enough answers to make a persuasive case to stay in the U.S.

As one officer emphasized, exhausted and confused immigrants simply "don't have the tools" to give that testimony and satisfy doubts about whether they would face persecution in Mexico. They certainly do not have the ability to articulate a "particular social group" they were being targeted as a member of.

Under MPP, asylum officers are not being asked to synthesize answers or provide any legal analysis; they are just checking boxes on a form and submitting it to their supervisors for review. The training asylum officers are given to elicit testimony and translate it into legal language has been cast aside.

As a result, approvals are rare. The ones that are granted are scrutinized by higher-ups. Normally, if a supervisor disagrees with a final decision, they can ask the asylum officer to go back and redo it. The head of the officers' union, who has been an asylum officer since the creation of a dedicated asylum corps in the early 1990s, has had only three cases where a supervisor disagreed with his assessment, and "in none of those cases," he says, "was I forced to do something I didn't believe in."

Under MPP, officers said that decisions to let an asylum seeker stay are often reviewed and blocked or overturned by asylum headquarters. Officers have also reported that a supervisor was told not to issue any positive MPP decisions without checking with the other officers on their team, and with headquarters. In two cases, officers said that both the asylum officer conducting the interview and the supervisor agreed that an interviewee who had been kidnapped by cartels while travelling through Mexico should not be sent back, but headquarters overruled them.

The asylum corps already considered their authority as a trained force was being eliminated while asylum law was being violated. They have also had to implement other Trump administration decisions, for example those eliminating domestic and gang violence as a basis for claims.

Asylum officers are also concerned that they will be replaced. The Trump administration recently issued orders for yet more restrictions and higher requirements. The president and DHS are also reportedly laying the groundwork for CBP agents -- who are assumed to be "tougher" on migrants and have no training concerning refugees -- to conduct those interviews instead. The asylum officers know that CBP is not in a position to uphold refugee law, and that removing them is part of the whole process now underway to undermine international law. Many want no part of it and certainly do not want their names used to justify these attacks. More and more are speaking out and demanding that refugee law and their authority to determine eligibility for asylum be respected.

A federal court temporarily blocked the new MPP policy of forcing asylum seekers to return to Mexico and remain there while their cases are considered. However, an appeals court issued a stay, so the program remains in force.

(Voice of Revolution. Photo: political hispanic)

Illegal Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment

U.S. Sanctions Violate Human Rights and International Code of Conduct

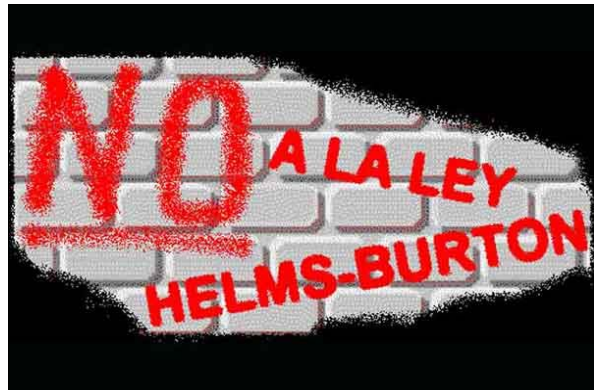
- UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights -

An independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council [of the United Nations] has expressed deep concern at the recent imposition of unilateral coercive measures on Cuba, Venezuela and Iran by the United States, saying the use of economic sanctions for political purposes violates human rights and the norms of international behaviour. Such action may precipitate man-made humanitarian catastrophes of unprecedented proportions.

"Regime change through economic measures likely to lead to the denial of basic human rights and indeed possibly to starvation has never been an accepted practice of international relations," said Idriss Jazairy, the UN Special Rapporteur concerned with the negative impact of sanctions. "Real concerns and serious political differences between governments must never be resolved by

precipitating economic and humanitarian disasters, making ordinary people pawns and hostages thereof."

The implementation of Title III of the *Helms-Burton Act* -- allowing U.S. citizens to file lawsuits against Cuban entities and foreign companies over property seized and used following Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution -- ignored protests by the European Union and Canada and was a direct attack on European and Canadian companies in Cuba, where they are the top foreign investors.



"The resort by a major power of its dominant position in the international financial arena against its own allies to cause economic hardship to the economy of sovereign States is contrary to international law, and inevitably undermines the human rights of their citizens," the Special Rapporteur said.

On 17 April the United States banned the Central Bank of Venezuela from conducting transactions in U.S. dollars after 17 May, and will cut off access to U.S. personal remittances and credit cards by March 2020.

"It is hard to figure out how measures which have the effect of destroying Venezuela's economy, and preventing Venezuelans from sending home money, can be aimed at 'helping the Venezuelan people', as claimed by the U.S. Treasury," the expert said.



His statements follow claims in a recent report published by the Washington-based Centre for Economic and Policy Research that 40,000 people may have died in Venezuela since 2017 because of U.S. sanctions.

Jazairy also said he was concerned the U.S. would not renew waivers for international buyers of Iranian oil, despite protests from NATO ally Turkey, among others. Washington has demanded that all remaining States which benefited from waivers stop purchases on May 1, or face sanctions.

"The extraterritorial application of unilateral sanctions is clearly contrary to international law," the expert said. "I am deeply concerned that one State can use its dominant position in international finance to harm not only the Iranian people, who have followed their obligations under the UN-approved nuclear deal to this day, but also everyone in the world who trades with them.

"The international community must come together to challenge what amounts to blockades ignoring a country's sovereignty, the human rights of its people, and the rights of third countries trading with sanctioned States, all while constituting a threat to world peace and security.

"I call on the international community to engage in constructive dialogue with Venezuela, Cuba, Iran and the United States to find a peaceful resolution in compliance with the spirit and letter of

the Charter of the United Nations before the arbitrary use of economic starvation becomes the new 'normal.'"

(May 6, 2019. Photo: Code Pink.)

71st Anniversary of Al Nakba

**Stand with the Palestinian People in Their Just
Struggle! Affirm the Right to Return!**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Condemn Zionist Occupiers Latest Criminal Bombardment of Gaza Strip

- Nick Lin -



Israeli bombardment on Gaza May 4, 2019 kills 14-month-old girl and pregnant woman.

The people of Gaza were once again assaulted from May 3 to 5, as the brutal 12-year siege by Zionist Israel and its occupying military forces continues. Twenty-seven Gazans have died and at least 154 have been injured due to the Israeli assault. The aggression got underway Friday, May 3, after Israeli forces killed four Palestinians, two in an air raid on southern Gaza and two in an attack on protesters taking part in the weekly Great March of Return actions near the border fence separating Gaza from the Occupied Territories. A ceasefire was reached on May 6 that has brought the Israeli aggression and Palestinian acts of resistance and self-defence to an end for the time being. It is said to include conditions that require Israel to mitigate the siege of Gaza.

As usual, Israel justified its aggression in the name of "self-defence" claiming two of its soldiers near the fence were wounded by Palestinian gunfire on May 3. However, it is well-documented that for more than a year, Israeli forces have regularly attacked and killed unarmed protesters taking part in the Great March of Return, as well as clearly identified medical personnel and journalists at these protests, with utmost disregard for human life.

This latest attack on Gaza underscores once again the need for all peace- and justice-loving people to stand with the heroic people of Palestine and Gaza in their just resistance to the illegal Israeli occupation and its war crimes.

(Photo: Palestine Information Centre)

Statement from Palestinian Center for Human Rights Regarding Aggression on Gaza Strip



Israeli bombardment of Gaza, May 5, 2019.

Hours before the announcement of a mutual ceasefire between Palestinian armed groups and Israel [on May 6], the Israeli forces intensified their aggression against the Gaza Strip at a high rate for two consecutive days during which the Israeli forces carried out intensive bombardment through their warplanes and artillery shells in land and sea, targeting more multi-story buildings and houses in a clear violation against Palestinian civilians.

As a result, hundreds of families became homeless and two million Palestinians suffered fear and terror. Moreover, the Israeli forces continued using the extrajudicial executions policy, which has been going on in recent years. Focusing on targeting residential buildings and houses on the second day of the offensive, the Israeli forces began their aggression the way they ended their aggression in 2014 in which they randomly destroyed dozens of residential buildings on the heads of their inhabitants.

Following the press release issued by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) on Saturday, May 4, 2019 and according to fieldworkers' documenting the incidents of the second day, the Israeli forces' bombardment resulted in the killing of 23 Palestinians. Fourteen of them were civilians; including three women and three children. Some of those killed inside their houses were from the same family. Moreover, 44 others were injured. Thus, the total number of killed Palestinians has risen to 23, including three women, one of whom was pregnant, and three children, including a baby girl.

The airstrikes targeted 20 residential houses, a residential building and a mosque; three workshops; 20 targeted empty land, cars, motorbikes, resorts, and other public and private property, in addition to training sites and border control points belonging to Palestinian armed groups. In addition to the artillery shelling that took place in various areas of the eastern Gaza Strip. [The Palestine News Network reported on May 7 that more than 130 residential apartments were completely destroyed, while 700 others were partially destroyed in the Israeli attacks. -- TML Ed. Note.]



For the first time since 2014, Israeli forces committed a new crime of extra-judicial execution, the killing of Ahmed al-Khudari after targeting his car in the center of Gaza City.

According to PCHR's investigations, at approximately 14:45 on Saturday, May 5, 2019, the Israeli warplanes launched a missile at a car driven by Hamed Ahmed Abdul Khudaria, from Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City, killing him. Hamed was driving his car in the vicinity of al-Sedrah area in al-Tuffah neighborhood, east of Gaza City.

At approximately 22:10 on Saturday evening, May 4, 2019, Israeli drone fired a missile at a group of civilians, who were in the vicinity of the American School former site, west of Beit Lahia, killing Khalid Mohammed Selmi Abu Qaliq (24), from the city, after he was hit with shrapnel throughout his body. Moreover, another civilian was seriously injured.

At approximately 17:35 on Sunday evening, the Israeli forces fired an artillery shell at a house belonging to Abdul Rahim Mustafa al-Madhoun (60), south of the American School, west of Beit Lahia. As a result, the house was destroyed and four civilians were killed, including a woman, and nine were injured.

Those killed civilians, including Abdul Rahim, were identified as: Abdul Rahim's son Abdullah Abdul Rahim Mustafa al-Madhooun (21), Fadi Ragheb Yusuf Badran (33), Amani 'Etfat Sha;ban al-Madhoun (36), who was pregnant at her ninth month. Furthermore, nine civilians were injured, including six children. Doctors classified the injuries of two of them as serious.

At approximately 17:45, the Israeli warplanes launched two missiles at the ground floor and first

floor in Zu'rob's Building near al-Shuhada'a Square (al-Nejmah), in the center of Rafah. As a result, 3 civilians were killed namely: 'Ali Ahmed Abdul Jawad (51), who was in al-Awa'el Educational Center, Mousa Husein Lafi Mo'amer (35) and Hani Hamdan Abu Sha'ar (37), who were at al-Fakher Cafe. Moreover, 4 civilians, including a child were sustained various wounds.

At approximately 19:50, Israeli warplanes launched a missile at the fifth floor in Building No. 12 of the Sheikh Zayed Buildings, north of the Gaza Strip. As a result, six civilians were killed namely: Ahmed Ramadan Rajab al-Ghazali (30), his wife Eman Abdullah Mousa al-Ghazali (29), their child Maria (5 months), Abdul Rahman Talal Abu al-Jedyan (12), his parents Tala 'Atiyah Abu al-Jedyan (48) and Raghdah Mohammed Abu al-Jedyan (46), whose dead bodies were recovered this morning [May 6] from under the rubble. Moreover, nine civilians living in the same building sustained minor and moderate injuries.



Palestinian schools damaged in the most recent Israeli bombardment.

The ongoing Israeli offensive disrupted all schools and universities, preventing tens of thousands of students from heading to their schools and universities. Moreover, several Governmental and non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were disrupted as well. Thus, obstructing the Palestinian civilians' lives and businesses and undermining their basic rights. [*Ma'an News Agency reported that 13 schools were severely damaged. -- TML Ed. Note.*]

Furthermore, Israeli forces issued a decision to close all crossings from and to Israel, stop the entry and exit of goods, prevent the movement of members, including patients, as well as prevent the entry of fuel into the Gaza Strip.

(PCHR statement slightly edited for style and grammar by TML. Photos: Electronic Intifada, Latuff, Palestine Information Centre)

Let Issam Stay Campaign Launches New Appeal to the People of Canada

The Let Issam Stay Campaign is once again calling on the people of Canada to stop the deportation of Issam Al Yamani. Issam Al Yamani is a Palestinian who has lived in Canada for over 30 years. He immigrated to Canada in 1985 and was granted permanent resident status. He

was denied citizenship in 1988 and has since been persecuted by the Canadian government, up to and including attempts at deportation, because of his staunch support for the just cause of the Palestinian people.



The Let Issam Stay Campaign was established to call on the people of Canada to write to the Minister of Public Safety, Ralph Goodale, asking him to grant a ministerial relief for Mr. Al Yamani. The Campaign has recently learned that Minister Goodale has denied this ministerial relief request. The Campaign is preparing to take the next step by launching a formal legal appeal to the Minister's decision.

It has issued the following appeal:

One year ago we wrote to inform you that the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) had recommended to the Minister of Public Safety (Ralph Goodale) that he deny Issam Al Yamani's request for Ministerial Relief from threat of deportation to statelessness. Thanks to your efforts, Minister Goodale received more than 200 letters of unwavering support, asking Minister Goodale to act fairly by granting Issam the ministerial relief he rightly deserves.

Now, with much disappointment and frustration, we are writing to inform you that the Minister has denied ministerial relief to our friend Issam Al Yamani. In doing so, he has denied justice to Issam by putting in jeopardy his right to continue to live in Canada, which is his only home.

This decision has been made despite the fact that nothing substantive has changed:

The truth remains that Issam is and has been a law-abiding resident of Canada and an active member of his community for more than 30 years. He has never been charged or convicted of breaking the law, and the Minister has not substantiated the unfair claim that Issam's presence is a danger to the security of Canada.

The truth remains that the CBSA itself confirmed (in a July 14, 2014 assessment) that Mr. Al Yamani did not constitute a danger to the national security of Canada. In a letter to Minister Goodale dated July 4, 2017, the Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA) also affirms that, far from being a threat to the national interest, "Mr. Al-Yamani is a model of civic and political

engagement".

The truth remains that Issam Al Yamani is being unjustly and unfairly penalized for exercising pro-Palestinian views that any Canadian would be legally allowed to express. It is Issam's right to the freedom of expression that appears to be the reason for the denial of ministerial relief. Specifically, the Minister did not like Mr. Al Yamani's statements made at a rally on July 30, 2014 in support of the Palestinian people during the time that Israel was bombing Gaza.

Of course, we will not let the struggle for Mr. Al Yamani's rights end here. The next step is a formal legal appeal to the Minister's decision, and it will be costly. We need your help once more. At this time we are asking you to make a donation to support the legal expenses that will be required to win this appeal.

Our target fundraising goal at this time is \$10,000. All donations -- however small or large -- will be needed, deeply appreciated, and will go directly to legal expenses in this effort to win the appeal.

Donate through Paypal or credit card [here](#)

Mail a donation cheque to:

Let Issam Stay Campaign

PO Box 494

Station P

Toronto, ON M5S 2T1

Make cheques payable to "Barbara Jackman and Associates"

While the legal system moves slowly, we will provide updates as soon as information becomes available. And we will keep you informed of other ways in which you can continue to show your support to Issam as he continues to fight for justice. If you have any questions or concerns, please email letissamstay@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

Let Issam Stay Campaign



74th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism in Europe

Honour the Memory of All Those Who Fought to Defeat Fascism by Making Canada a Zone for Peace

On May 9, 1945, Nazi Germany surrendered to the Soviets in Berlin. Since then, May 9 marks the victory of the Allied forces over fascism in World War II. On this occasion, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) salutes all Canadians who contributed to the victory against fascism. It salutes the peoples of Europe, Asia and the entire world who contributed to this historic victory. Most importantly, it recognizes and salutes the courage and sacrifice of the Soviet Union, whose people rose as one and broke the back of the Nazi war machine at tremendous cost. CPC(M-L) pays deepest respects to the memory of all those from the occupied countries who fought and died as a result of the Nazi onslaught and thanks the resistance fighters who worked as one to defeat the fascist occupier. All of them fought for peace, freedom and democracy so that humanity would never again know the scourge of fascism and war.

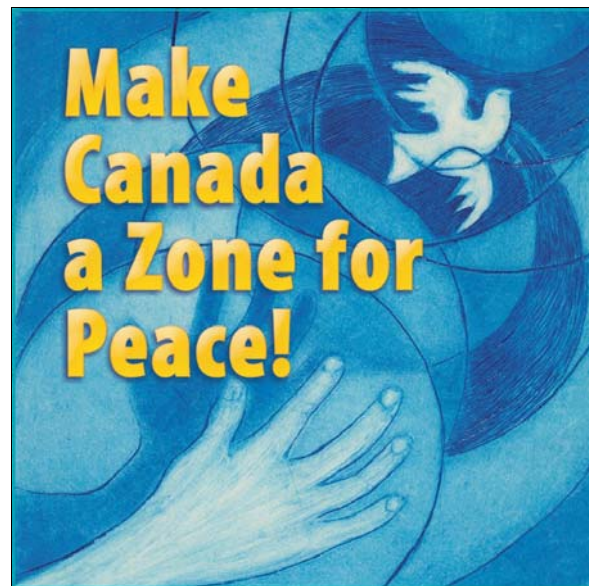


Immortal Regiment march in Montreal, May 9, 2019. (G. Proulx)

Canada, joined by then-British colony Newfoundland, played its part by sending 1.1 million troops to fight in the war, including more than 130,000 Quebecers. They distinguished themselves in many battles and campaigns, particularly in the Normandy landings, the Italian campaign and the liberation of Holland.

Today, this anniversary calls on everyone to once again take a stand that these times require -- to oppose wars of aggression and occupation and the use of force to resolve conflicts between nations, so that the dangers of another world war and other calamities that threaten humanity in the most profound ways can be prevented.

Let us together take up the discussion of how to Make Canada a Zone for Peace so that Canada becomes a force for peace and the international rule of law, not an instrument of the U.S. imperialist striving for world domination. Canada's political and economic integration into the U.S. war machine must be ended. The role Canada is playing internationally as a henchman for U.S. imperialist aggression, as seen today in its role to foment regime change in Venezuela and appease U.S. policy against Cuba, is not acceptable. On May 9, 2019, we honour the memory of all those who fought to defeat fascism by working to make Canada a zone for peace! All out to humanize the natural and social environment and Make Canada a Zone for Peace!



Worldwide Immortal Regiment Marches

Around the world, since 2012, veterans who fought in WWII and their descendants take part in processions to commemorate the memory of their relatives, known as the March of the Immortal Regiment. The website Russia Beyond informed on May 8 that the march "originally began in 2012 in the Siberian city of Tomsk, but this year, the Immortal Regiment is held in more than 110 countries and 500 cities all over the world. People join the processions holding the portraits of their relatives who fought in World War II, and every year the number of participating cities grows." Millions of people took part across Europe, Asia, the Americas and Oceania.

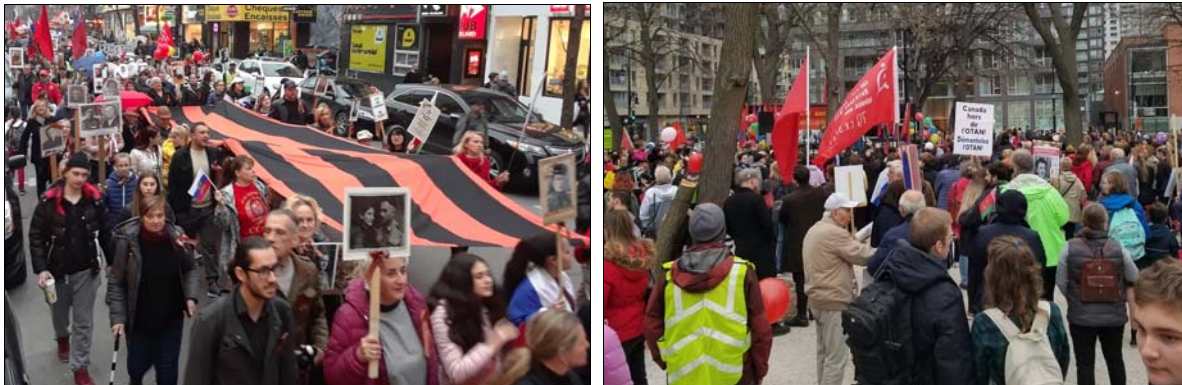
While many participants are Red Army veterans and their descendants, these marches are a converging point for all Allied veterans and their family members, as well as many others who wish to express their profound gratitude for the sacrifices made to defeat Nazi fascism.

Canada

Halifax, NS



Montreal, QC





Ottawa, ON



Toronto, ON





Around the World

Moscow, Russia



Novgorod, Russia



Kiev, Ukraine



Odessa, Ukraine



Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



Prague, Czech Republic



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Hong Kong, China



Vietnam



Busan, Korea



Tokyo, Japan



Brisbane; Sydney, Australia



Havana, Cuba



Buenos Aires, Argentina



Washington, DC, USA



New York City, USA



Seattle, WA, USA



London, England



Manchester, England



Denmark



Paris, France



Rome, Italy



(Photos: O. Sarycheva, G. Proulx, Russian Embassy in Canada, Moscow Times, Russia Beyond, TASS, RT, Best Health 4 You, d_jyldyz, Russian Embassies in Malaysia, Vietnam and Denmark, Sputnik, R. Makhmutov, H. Naavi.)

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