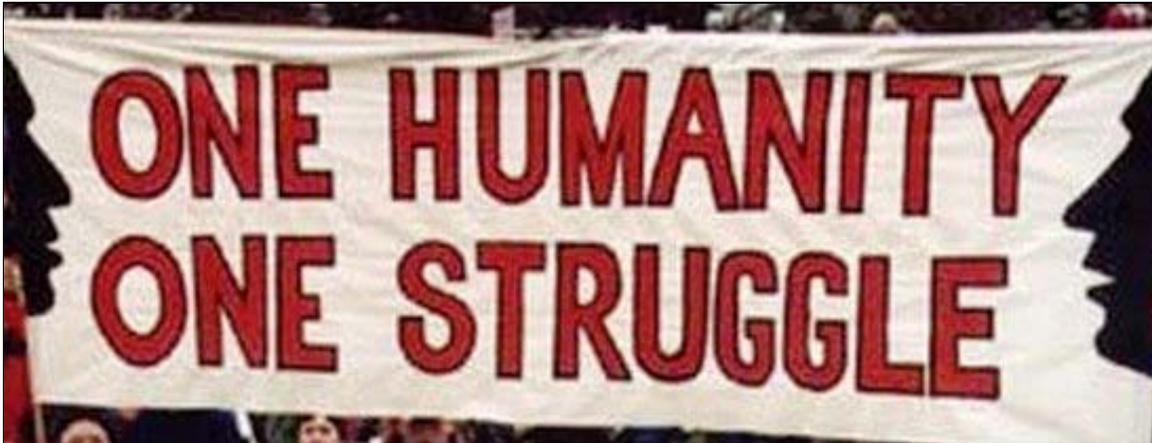


May 4, 2019 - No. 16

Matters of Concern to the Polity



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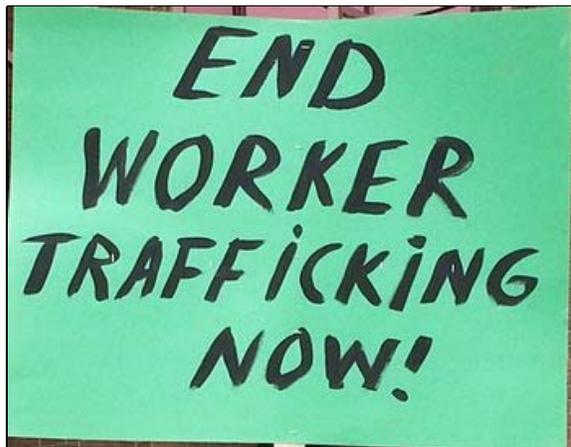
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Human Trafficking in Canada

Together as One Humanity Take Action Against Human Trafficking



The United Nations defines human trafficking "as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, or coercion) for an improper purpose including forced labour or sexual exploitation."

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that in 2016 more than 40 million people were living in conditions of modern slavery, with the majority having been victims of human trafficking. The report said 25 million of those workers were providing slave labour in construction, manufacturing, agriculture and domestic work. Another 5 million, the majority young women and girls, were victims of sexual slavery.



Canada was one of the leading states involved in creating the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementary Legislation to the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, known as the Palermo Protocol, which Canada ratified in 2004. However, when it comes to enforcement of the Protocol, Canada is an example of how false pretenses are used to provide cheap labour and enforce the anti-social offensive whereby the standards of all working people are lowered. Human traffickers, known as recruiters of labour in

foreign countries, are readily accommodated. Both workers and students are recruited by extorting large sums of money under the hoax that they will have a chance after two years to apply for permanent residence. This has led to hundreds of thousands of workers being denied their basic rights as workers and human beings, as well as deported along with their families if found to be "illegal" in any way, mostly through no fault of their own. It also swells the ranks of so-called undocumented workers whose conditions of life and work are the worst. Even though Canadian laws actually facilitate human trafficking, the government insists it is illegal and that it upholds the rule of law.

In a report entitled *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2016*, Statistics Canada notes among other things: "By its very nature, trafficking in persons is difficult to measure. Statistics Canada, through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, collects information on incidents of human trafficking violations which come to the attention of Canadian police. These are *Criminal Code* offences and an offence under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* which targets cross-border trafficking."

The report points out that between "2009 and 2016, there were a total of 1,220 police-reported incidents of human trafficking" in Canada and that the number and rate of human trafficking incidents have steadily increased since 2010. It cites as well the Trend Database, which found that of the 1,099 police-reported incidents of human trafficking incidents dating between 2009 and 2016, 55 per cent of the cases were reported in the years 2015 and 2016.

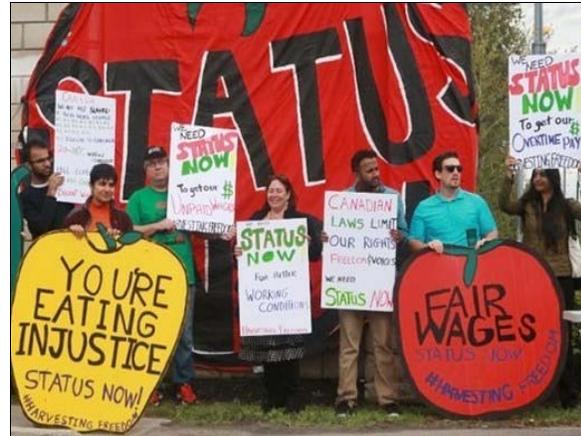
Between 2009 and 2016, of reported human trafficking cases, 66 per cent were from Ontario, 14 per cent from Quebec, and 8 per cent from Alberta. The other 12 per cent of cases were spread over the rest of Canada. Statistics Canada notes that the vast majority of trafficked persons are women.

The report underscores the fact that the vast majority of human trafficking crimes are not reported in Canada. Human trafficking victims are made vulnerable by their very condition and become afraid to seek help because the Canadian state declares them illegal and without rights as humans.

Human trafficking cases are underreported with very few convictions in Canada even though the former Harper regime called it "one of the most heinous crimes imaginable." The Statistics Canada report notes, "Due to challenges in prosecuting human trafficking cases, prosecutors will often proceed with other complementary or less serious charges. [...] This may explain the large proportion of human trafficking cases resulting in decisions of stayed or withdrawn."

The low rate of reporting and low conviction rate in prosecutions shows that the entire murky system dealing with migrant workers that the Canadian state has created is to ensure a cheap and plentiful supply of workers for Canadian monopolies and other businesses that profit from their work, not to speak of the unconscionable thievery of those who directly traffic human beings in a modern version of the global slave trade.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), through which businesses that show a need for foreign workers are allowed to recruit overseas, and the more than 50-year-old Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), plus other worker recruitment programs such as those run by the provinces, have created the conditions for human traffickers to operate with impunity within the legal margins of these programs.



The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) has been at the forefront of the fight in defence of immigrants and refugees for more than 40 years. It notes in an April 2018 submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on their study of human trafficking in Canada that while some cases of human trafficking are being prosecuted in the courts, Canada is doing very little to protect the victims of human trafficking. The CCR states: "Notably, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* provides no legislated protection to trafficked persons. The only reference to trafficked persons in the legislation is the provisions in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, which makes the fact that a person is being trafficked a factor in favour of immigration detention."

The CCR also wrote in its submission that even the Temporary Residence Permits (TPRs), which are the only tool available for the protection of human trafficking victims who have come forward, hardly meet the need. The CCR says, "There are very few TPRs issued annually and they pose limitations even when issued. [...] In the period 2011 and 2015, between 5 and 22 new TPRs were issued per year. These numbers seem particularly low considering that Canada has been identified as a destination country for trafficking, and some 80,000 Temporary Foreign Workers enter Canada every year."

Furthermore, the CCR notes that even with the few TPRs issued by the government, they are not extended to family members.

In another of its reports, *Evaluating Migrant Worker Rights in Canada*, the CCR in 2018 highlights the role Canada plays in creating the conditions for the displacement of people around the world, citing the Philippines, Guatemala and Mexico, where Canadian private mining companies have displaced entire communities, forcing people to look outside their countries for a livelihood and therefore becoming vulnerable to human trafficking. The CCR also cites Canada's trade agreements, such as NAFTA which has been responsible for forcing Mexican farmers, whose livelihoods have been destroyed, to seek work in Canada as migrant agricultural workers and thus become targets of human traffickers.



Canada's participation in wars of aggression, occupation, economic blockades, sanctions and other acts of interference in the internal affairs of countries, such as it is doing right now to organize a coup and regime change in Venezuela, has contributed to a large number of people becoming refugees and migrants. The UN pointed out in a report in 2018 that the refugee crisis internationally has made entire populations vulnerable to human trafficking, which generates a criminal profit of approximately \$32 billion annually.

In participating in this modern day slave trade, the government, while shedding crocodile tears for human rights and trafficking, has failed to address the problem. A simple proposal by the CCR and others that migrant workers to Canada be provided some stability and legality through an open work permit that enables them to leave an exploitative and abusive work environment has so far been ignored. Similarly, the government has ignored proposals by the CCR and others to regulate the recruitment of migrant workers to ensure that their rights are protected and, given that migrant workers are needed to perform work in Canada, they should be granted immigrant status to permanently settle, if they wish.

The Trudeau government, when it came to power in 2015 said it would act to stop human trafficking, but has not done so, just as it has failed to resolve the serious issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women many of whom are also victims of human trafficking.

Human trafficking and the plight of refugees and migrant workers who are victims of this and other crimes are a problem confronting Canadian society. Refugees and migrant workers, including victims of human trafficking, belong to our one humanity and, more precisely, our one Canadian working class. This working class -- by mobilizing its independent thinking, organization and numbers -- must seriously step up the work in defence of the rights of all. While it is the working people who are blamed for being anti-immigrant and xenophobic, in fact it is narrow private interests that are traffickers of human beings who are "anti-immigrant." They blame the people to divide the people's resistance struggle to the anti-social offensive, while they change citizenship and immigration laws to facilitate the importation of temporary foreign workers, many of whom have to pay enormous sums to so-called recruiters to acquire work permits under the hoax that when their term is finished they can apply for permanent residence. Others in Canada on temporary work permits are exploited to the bone and have no access to services because their status is made semi-illegal at the best of times, such as when they are forced to work with borrowed names and social insurance numbers on pain of deportation if they do not accept. The movement to defend the rights of all seeks to put an end to this system of modern day slavery not only in Canada but by taking action here to contribute to resolving the problem worldwide.

(With files from Canadian Council for Refugees, Migrante Canada, www.ilo.org, Statistics Canada, www.UNODC.org)



Status for All Migrant and Temporary Workers in Canada! End Canada's Participation in Human Trafficking!

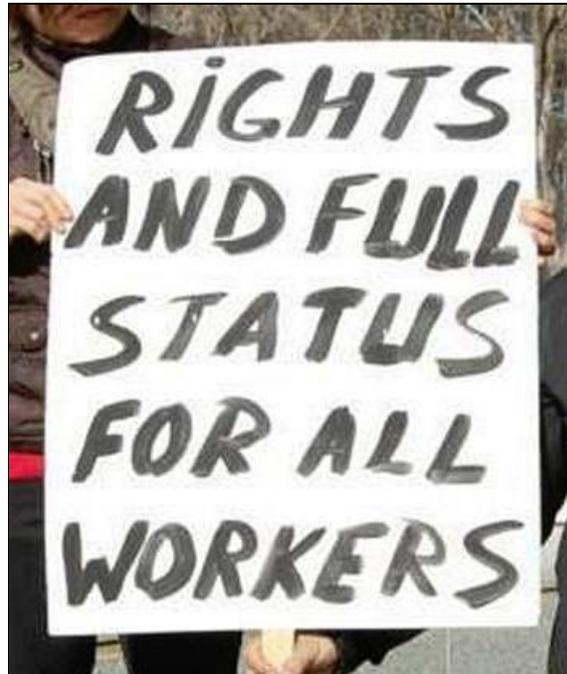
- Philip Fernandez -

The government must be held to account for its role in creating a temporary foreign worker regime that employers use to provide cheap workers for themselves. Through this and other programs that deprive temporary workers of their rights, the government also enables private agencies to profit from recruiting and often outright robbing the foreign workers they traffic to employers.

The unjust treatment of migrant workers shows that Justin Trudeau's claim to champion the cause of women's rights is also bogus in practice. The Trudeau government has not sorted out the trafficking and killing of Indigenous women and girls. Likewise it does not protect and defend the rights of temporary foreign workers, the majority of whom are women.

The people demand justice and a guarantee of the rights of all. The state-organized deportation of the Concepcion family on January 27 (see below) and other attacks against migrant and foreign temporary workers, in many cases suffering abuse from employers and human traffickers, must end.

An example of such abuse is the criminal case recently concluded, after six years, against Hector Mantolino, the owner and operator of a company in Halifax. On March 1, Mantolino was sentenced to two years in jail for violating the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, in which 56 charges originally filed in 2013 were ultimately rolled into one indictment. Over the years, Mantolino brought 28 workers from the Philippines under a foreign worker program. He was found to have underpaid his workers and exploited them. The case revealed that he threatened workers and told them that if they complained about their situation to others then the Canadian government would deport them back to the Philippines. Documents estimate that Mantolino paid them at least \$500,000 less than their total reported salaries. According to local media, one of these workers, Liza Alcantara, was told by Mantolino that "she would have to pay Mantolino \$2,000 for air fare and \$100 a month for her rent. Alcantara said she was also told that her real salary would be \$500 for 134 hours worked (\$3.75 per hour) with only \$5 for overtime."



The government takes no responsibility for contributing to and parasitizing off of the situation of an economically depressed and oppressed Philippines. Colonial plunder and control have left the Philippines destitute and severely underdeveloped, forcing some 12 million Filipinos to leave their homeland and live abroad seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Filipino workers who have migrated abroad collectively contribute some \$30 billion annually to the foreign-dominated Philippines economy. ExPress Money, which many Filipino migrant workers use to transfer funds to their families in the Philippines, noted in 2016: "Money transfers from Filipinos working all over the world account for at least 10 per cent of the country's GDP,

the second largest source of foreign capital after value-added exports like electronic components, and a major source of private consumption which in turn accounts for 75 per cent of the GDP."

Successive governments in the Philippines, including the present Duterte regime, have done nothing to extricate the Philippines from the U.S.-dominated imperialist system of states. The regime actively encourages the out-migration of workers from the Philippines, while providing no protection for them from the abuse and thievery of unscrupulous human traffickers and foreign regimes, such as in Canada, that facilitate this inhumanity.



Reject Attempts to Blame the Peoples for the Global Migration Crisis

- Diane Johnston -



An Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada backgrounder dated December 10, 2018 states, "In response to the Syria refugee crisis and increasing movements of refugees and migrants, the UN General Assembly in 2016 adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. That declaration launched separate processes to create two non-binding international agreements: one for refugees (Global Compact on Refugees) and one for migrants (the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM))."

The backgrounder informs that the estimated 258 million international migrants worldwide represent a 49 per cent increase compared with the number in the year 2000, and 3.3 per cent of the world's total population.[1]

The GCM says, "[It] seeks to reconcile tensions underlying international migration, including national security concerns, human security, dignity and rights." It concludes: "The successful negotiation of the GCM in the current global climate related to migration and sovereignty underscores the value of multilateral dialogue on critical global issues and the role the UN can play in supporting a rules-based international system." [2]

An attempt to give credence to a rule of law that in practice no longer exists has become a matter of very serious concern. Various forces have come forward to defend liberal democratic notions of peace, order and good government, enshrined in the rule of law, as if this were the solution to the very serious abuses of power we are witnessing today. However, each passing day reveals that the system called liberal democracy is precisely what has collapsed into the anarchy, violence and chaos that is carrying out abuses and condoning them and has proved incapable of developing a pro-social alternative.

Louise Arbour, a Canadian who is the UN's Special Representative for International Migration, reports that the GCM initiative "emerged from the intolerable sight of large numbers of migrants losing their lives, and of a growing perception that governments had lost control of their borders." This way of speaking is devoid of context and gives governments which pursue the neo-liberal anti-social offensive a way to justify these actions and use the issue of migration to foment social division. Human trafficking today is the consequence of creating what are called prosperous economies by upholding so-called market economies, human rights and multi-party systems. The rich have become richer and the poor poorer but nonetheless the architects and promoters of this system are let off the hook.

The loss of migrants' lives and the loss of control of borders is not accidental but rather the double-edged sword of imperialism. Migrants and refugees are the canaries in the mine, victims of the neo-liberal assault on the international rule of law and nation-building, which arose from the ashes of the great victory over fascism in 1945 and now lie ruined from the attacks of imperialist globalization.

Except in rare examples, U.S.-led imperialism has breached the borders of many countries to gain control over their economies, politics and all aspects of life, including culture and ideology. In the case of those countries that imperialism has been unable to overwhelm, it has resorted to destruction through predatory wars, financing of mercenaries to foster regime change, economic sabotage, blockades and sanctions to cripple a targeted economy, such as that of Venezuela. The attacks create refugees and an outward migration of desperate people seeking a life as they have every right to do.

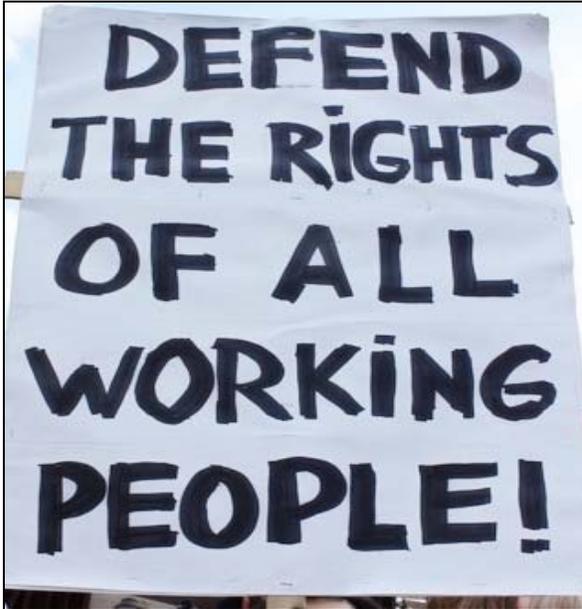


The "estimated 258 million migrants" have become an international reserve army of unemployed workers willing and able to sell their capacity to work at almost any price to gain a foothold towards a better and stable life. How convenient for the big powers to find millions of global unemployed at a time when their own populations of working people are shrinking because of a falling birth rate.

Imperialism of the big powers is the force behind the nation-wrecking agenda of unjust wars, regime change, big power interference in other country's internal affairs, economic sabotage, blockades and sanctions, the out-of-control pillage of natural resources, and the instability and environmental degradation and climate change provoked by corporate greed, beyond the reach of any rules or regulations. The lack of control over the affairs that affect the lives of working people is the challenge they face and which they must organize to change.

The financial oligarchy deals with migration in the most self-serving way possible, namely, to blame migrants for their plight and divide the working people of the countries which are using these migrants as cheap labour. It is important that working people in Canada not fall prey to this propaganda that does not serve their interests. The governments in these countries that serve the interests of the rich then bemoan the fact that as human beings migrants must be provided with the essentials of life at the standards of living the various countries have attained. Thus, the plight of migrants and their role in the economy is presented as the "inability of governments to control their borders and stop the flow of migrants" because private interests have been politicized. The old democratic forms no longer exercise authority because the conditions they were designed to deal with have changed.

The means used to defend what is called the national interest in no way restores a national authority but on the contrary turns people into categories to be criminalized. Heightened border control and a fight against organized crime and gangs consider, as a premise, migrants and refugees illegitimate usurpers, who must then prove themselves worthy. The Trudeau government equates any nation-building in opposition to imperialist control as an attack on the peace, order and good government of the liberal democratic order. Nonetheless, the plight of those forced into migration today compels us to act to build the New, not to defend an order which no longer exists and is therefore incapable of sorting out any problem in the present.



Many migrants, after a treacherous journey they never wished to make in the first place, end up living and working underground as undocumented cheap workers, fearing arrest and deportation each and every day. They suffer abuse at the hands of human traffickers and unscrupulous employers. They work to send money home to their families and provide a life for the next generation.

Migrants are victims of a world order that has fallen apart under the aegis of the global financial oligarchy. They are part and parcel of the great sea of humanity which forms one working class worldwide striving to empower itself so that it can humanize the natural and social environment. Defending the rights of all, especially by speaking out against the abuse of

fellow human beings and against their enslavement and plight, is to assume social responsibility and take concrete action to take control of our own lives and nation-building.

The strength of working people lies in their overwhelming numbers and aims for society which are not self-serving. Working people gain control of their lives when they speak up to defend the rights of all in their own name, and do not let others with agendas speak in their name, as is done all too often at this time.

Notes

1. "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration," Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, December 10, 2018.
2. *Ibid.*

Predatory Nature of Recruitment of International Students and the "International Mobility Program"

- Peggy Morton -

The number of international students in Canada has greatly expanded as the desperation to use them for private profit increases.

As of December 31, 2018 there were 572,415 international study permit holders, up from 412,101 two years earlier in 2016. India is now the largest source at 172,625, a dramatic increase from

76,289 in 2016. China comes next at 142,985, up from 131,740 two years earlier, followed by south Korea at 24,195, France at 22,745 and Vietnam at 20,330. In addition, in 2016, there were 20,679 from the United States and 12,649 from Nigeria.

Of these 355,976 are ages 15-29; 35,303 are ages 30-40 and 17,707 are under 15 years old.[1]

Approved institutions are now listed by name on the Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees Canada website. This listing follows a number of scandals where schools and "immigration consultants" defrauded students by claiming that their institutions qualified when they did not. Generally the institutions that qualify include degree granting universities and colleges, technical colleges which offer degrees, diplomas and certifications, as well as flight schools, bible schools and other religious institutions. Some of the universities listed are not known or do not have recognized names. In some cases the institutions are approved only for specific courses -- for example, they offer a flight school program that may qualify but other programs do not.[2]

There is an "International Mobility Program" which features open work permits rather than employer-specific work permits. This includes the working holiday portion of International Experience Canada, the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program, spouses/common-law partners of highly-skilled foreign workers and international students, and certain foreign nationals who are already in Canada waiting for the finalization of their applications for permanent residence.

Recruitment policies of public institutions and their interaction with human traffickers, and the growth of private colleges and even universities that recruit international students at exorbitant fees while working with immigration consultants are not readily made known to the public. It is known, however, that the level of abuse practiced is predatory and unconscionable. "Immigration consultants" promote becoming a student and then receiving a post-graduation work permit as a way to achieve landed status for foreign youth and workers within the country who have become undocumented or those whose work permits are ending. This method is also promoted for educated people coming to Canada for the first time and wishing to emigrate.

A study permit allows the holder to work part-time while studying and full-time when school is not in session. The number of international students who work while studying is not published with the other stats, and may not even be collected, as a study permit allows the student to work, and they do not need a work permit until after graduation.

A post-graduation permit is only available after graduation from an approved institution. Many of the people find themselves in institutions which do not in fact qualify and they are therefore not eligible. Post-graduation employment is the largest single category in the International Mobility Programs with 101,386 permit holders on December 31, 2016.

Post-graduation work permits are good for eight months to three years, with longer times for post university degrees at three years, and shorter programs given less time. People working under a post-graduation permit can be "invited" to apply for landed status or simply have to leave. They have no rights of any kind.

Notes

1. Data tables on study permit holders are found [here](#).
2. The list of approved institutions by province can be found [here](#).



Opposition to State-Sanctioned Human Trafficking

Quebec Association of Lawyers Opposes Coercive Measures on Workers Seeking to Immigrate to Quebec

The Association des avocats et avocates en droit de l'immigration (AQAADI) appeared before the Quebec National Assembly's Committee on Citizen Relations on February 26, to discuss Bill 9, *An Act to increase Québec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration*.

On behalf of AQAADI, immigration lawyer Guillaume Cliche-Rivard opposed the government's planned use of coercion against workers seeking to immigrate to Quebec, as this would place people in a position of insecurity as to whether they would be able to maintain their permanent resident status. "A foreign national becomes a permanent resident of all of Canada, not of a city or of a profession," he stated. Rendering permanent residency conditional based on regionalization or sectoral labour needs would violate Article 6.2 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* whereby permanent residents have the right to move to and to take up residence anywhere in Canada, he added.

Cliche-Rivard continued, saying the same right applies to a person's job. People cannot be forced to take a job or be threatened with losing their status upon losing their job. "The potential withdrawal of residency will affect children, families, people who may have to leave Quebec because they no longer respond 100 per cent to your conditions," he said.



Members of the Association des avocats et avocates en droit de l'immigration appear before the Quebec National Assembly's Committee on Citizen Relations.

Quebec Immigration Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette argued that prior to 2016, conditional permanent residency had existed in Quebec's immigration law. "For a people, for a nation, it is fundamental that it has its say with regard to immigration to Quebec. Therefore as of the time that a person is selected, based on Quebec criteria, obviously Quebec is able to impose certain conditions, as is the case with the federal government when someone is granted citizenship. And that is a choice that we make [...] to re-introduce an article that was part of the powers of the Quebec government."

Acknowledging nonetheless that a permanent resident could not be forced to settle in a specific region, the Minister suggested that such power could be exerted in the case of a business for a person accepted as an immigrant-entrepreneur, forcing the person to establish that business in various Quebec regions. The measure "could be used to ensure that people know French," he added.



Québec Immigration Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette before Committee.

Cliche-Rivard replied by pointing out the government's contradictory claim that its conditions do not impose localization: "Read your own words because that is precisely what you are saying: 'We are placing conditions in order to ensure [...] the meeting of regional and sectoral labour needs.' Now if that is not an imposition of localization, then please explain to us what is meant by 'the regional or sectoral creation of enterprises.'"

The Minister did not reply.

The AQAADI also challenged the Minister regarding the backlog of 18,000 applications for permanent residency. The AQAADI has successfully obtained a temporary injunction in the Superior Court of Quebec forcing the Minister to continue dealing with these files. The demand requires the government to finish handling the paper applications, involving some 4,500 files sent to the Ministry before December 2015, as these files are complete. It then suggests that the 3,700 internet applications from those presently residing in Quebec be dealt with, as these are people on a work or study permit who directly correspond to the needs of the labour market and have already demonstrated their capacity to integrate. Regarding the remaining 10,000 applications, pointing to the fact that there are at present 120,000 jobs to be filled in Quebec, AQAADI proposes that a quick evaluation be made as to how many qualify based on the evaluation grid currently in use, last modified in August 2018.

(Photos: Quebec National Assembly website)



Ontario Migrant Workers Victimized by Labour Trafficking Speak Out

Migrant workers and their supporters are speaking out about the dire situation these workers face when they are recruited to come to Canada, and putting forward their demands to governments.

Leny Simbre, Migrante Ontario Chairperson stated that her organization has three demands: "First, we seek the implementation of a policy that will mandate all foreign recruitment agencies to obtain a licence from Employment Standards. Second, we demand that all employers wanting to recruit foreign workers in Ontario be registered with Employment Standards. Third, we demand for the Province of Ontario to advocate to the Federal Government to provide Permanent Residency on landing for all migrant workers coming to work in Canada."



At an April 10 press conference in Toronto organized by Migrante Ontario, Ontario-based migrant workers Maila Ceguerra, Lourdes De la Pena, Jesse Veneranda and Marisol Bobadilla, spoke out about their exploitation by recruitment agency Link4Staff Inc. and their former employer Sharon Mushroom Farm, and the case they have filed against the agency and the employer at the Ontario Small Claims Court. They were joined by those fighting for the rights of migrant workers to call on the Ontario government to license recruiters, register employers and hold them jointly financially liable for the fees paid by the workers to come to Canada. They also called on the federal government to ensure these workers receive permanent resident status on arrival.



The four migrant workers have launched a petition to regulate foreign recruitment agencies and employers hiring migrant workers. To read and sign the petition, [click here](#).

Since May 2018, these workers have been speaking out and mounting legal complaints against recruitment agencies and their employers. As a result of their organizing, Lily Miranda, a recruiter for the firm A&L Hammer, and Laxman Marsonia, owner of Sharon Mushroom Farm, were charged by the Canada Border Services Agency with human trafficking and misrepresentation-related offences under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. A year later, the Ontario court ordered A&L Hammer to pay back illegally charged recruiter fees to the migrant workers. The recruiter Miranda has not been convicted.

Migrant workers in Ontario face a particular situation, distinct from other provinces, because of non-enforceable provincial laws and federal temporary immigration programs which favour exploitation and human trafficking. Manitoba, Alberta, Nova Scotia and British Columbia have recruiter registries which are said to create an awareness of migrant worker employers. However, employer specific work permits and temporary immigration streams create worker precarity, limiting workers' ability to assert their rights and allowing for labour super-exploitation.

(Migrante Ontario Press Release, April 8, 2019. Photos: Migrante.)

Abuse of Migrant Workers in the Food Processing Sector

In December 2018, *TML Weekly* spoke with a trade union organizer about what monopolies in the food processing sector are doing with the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP).

He said that federal regulations limit the number of foreign workers to 10 per cent of the workforce in a given plant, a cap set by the Harper government.

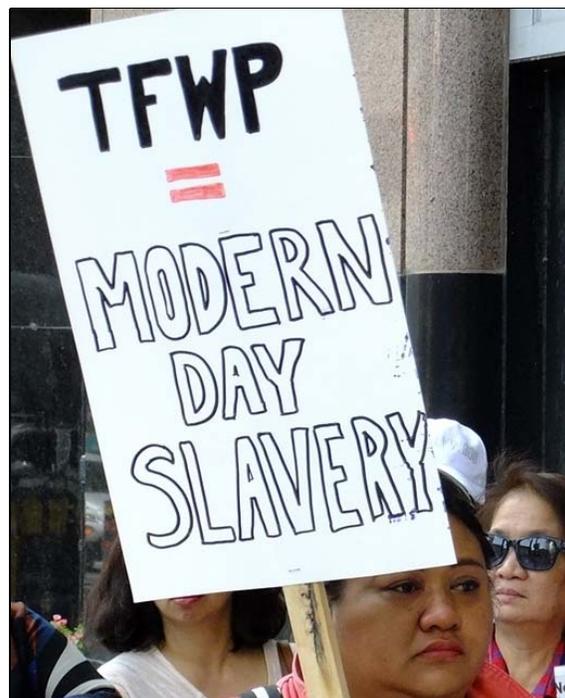
He explained that monopolies in the food processing sector use the TFWP in different ways. They develop business links within the federal and provincial government at several levels related to the program to establish, among other things, which country is favoured for a particular type of employment. For example, he explained that to find truck drivers to work in Quebec, France is a first option because the workforce is trained and the workers come from a developed country and are familiar with modern production. This is what monopolies are looking for because the workers require only a minimum of training and are ready to produce quickly. The relationship with France is not the same as with a developing country.

Once the links are made, the monopoly can go through recruitment agencies, which he outright calls human smugglers. He considers this practice a form of modern slave trading. These smugglers deal with a monopoly's offices in a particular country to provide workers.

However, he explained, a monopoly typically establishes its own networks of contacts and does its own interviews, hiring directly, without going through agencies. In this process, there would be several selections of candidates to come to Canada. Criteria for selecting workers are not spelled out, he said, but they are often linked to the racist policies of the country in question. For example, Jamaica will send more Haitian Jamaicans than so-called old-stock Jamaicans. The criteria will depend on the country and its conditions. When the selection is made, the contracts are signed and the workers are divided among the various factories of the monopoly.

Generally speaking, the contract is a two-year contract, but there may be exceptions, he said.

He added that monopolies in this sector are lobbying governments to lighten and deregulate the TFWP because it serves them well.



He explained that after a worker completes his or her contract and returns to their country, if they are later rehired by the company, they start from scratch without any seniority, including wages. There may also be provisions that permit a monopoly to lay off foreign workers if it longer needs them, no matter the reason, whereupon they would be subject to deportation.

He recounted some horror stories in which foreign workers are outright scammed. A stipulation of TFWP is that before the workers arrive in Canada, the monopoly must guarantee they have a place to stay. Unscrupulous companies often house workers in their own buildings and charge them very high rent, forcing many workers to live together in a single place. Unions have filed grievances against this, but without success. He concluded by saying that much more needs to be made known about the conditions in which so-called foreign workers are forced to live and work.

The Ordeal of Gemma Concepcion's Family



The Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) on January 27, deported Gemma Concepcion, a 49-year-old migrant worker from the Philippines, her Filipino husband Enrico, also a migrant worker, and their two Canadian-born children -- Ricca Mae, 12 and Mark Eli, 8. The 14-year struggle of Gemma to build a productive life for herself and her family in Canada came crashing down at the hands of a Canadian state that can only be characterized as inhuman. Her struggle is not unique and relates to the imperialist control of the world, including Gemma's native Philippines. Workers in this imperialist world are deprived of the rights they possess by virtue of being human. Gemma's case is a striking example of how working people must unite and organize to deprive the ruling imperialist elite of their power to deprive people of their rights.

Every single day more than 6,000 workers leave the Philippines in search of a better life for themselves and to provide for the family members they leave behind. Gemma Concepcion was one of them in 2005. Poverty and unemployment of a Philippines' economy dominated by foreign imperialists and their local flunkies forced her to leave her home. Western and Japanese imperialists have colonized and plundered the Philippines for hundreds of years, stripping it of its social wealth and blocking it from developing a modern socialized economy of industrial mass production under the control of Filipinos in opposition to imperialist dictate. Canadian mining monopolies have long been directly involved in the theft of the Philippines' mineral resources, engaging in displacement of local people and expropriation of their lands and natural resources, particularly the local Indigenous people, called the Lumad.

Gemma Concepcion's Struggle for Her Rights as a Worker and Human Being

Gemma accepted a job offer through an agency in the Philippines to work in Canada with the promise that she would become a Permanent Resident after working for a period of time. For this promise, the human traffickers forced her to hand over to them \$14,000, which she raised through the sale of part of her family's land.

When Gemma arrived in Toronto in September 2005, she was unaware that the recruiting agency was running a human trafficking operation and had issued her a fake passport to bring her into Canada. As soon as she arrived, a representative of the agency confiscated Gemma's documentation, leaving her "undocumented."

Her future husband Enrico, who had arrived in Canada the year before, was also a victim of human trafficking. In Canada, they both worked for an agency that provided custodial services and met while employed as cleaners at the Ontario College of Arts and Design, cleaning classrooms and studios.

They raised their two children and attended a local church and contributed to their community. At the same time, they were always living in a state of terror as "undocumented" workers. Their two children, born in Canada, missed several years of public schooling for fear of being targeted as children of undocumented workers.

The CBSA arrested Gemma on January 16, 2016, detaining her for 10 days, which traumatized her family. The pastor of her church posted bail and the congregation advised her and her family to contact Migrante-Ontario -- a defence organization for Filipino migrant workers, which is the provincial affiliate of Migrante Canada.

The CBSA gave Gemma a temporary reprieve in March the following year, while her case was being reviewed. Her legal team made a permanent residency application based on humanitarian considerations, which was denied. This decision was sent for a judicial review at the Federal Court, which went against Gemma. In the meantime, Migrante Ontario organized fund-raisers and public meetings to bring attention to Gemma's case.

Subsequent to the Federal Court decision, the CBSA informed Gemma that she and her family would be deported on January 27. On January 25 an emergency action was held in downtown Toronto to bring attention to the plight of Gemma and her family. On the same day, her lawyer heard the outcome of an application made to the Supreme Court of Canada to have the deportation order stayed was unsuccessful.



Emergency rally held in Toronto in support of the Concepcion family, January 25, 2019.

Inhumanity Towards the Victims of Colonialism and Denial of Their Rights

What happened to Gemma and her family was unjust and unconscionable. The Canadian ruling elite take no responsibility for creating the conditions that generate mass migration from oppressed countries such as the Philippines or the abuse vulnerable people suffer at the hands of human traffickers. The Canadian authorities turn a blind eye to the shattered lives of victims who are criminalized and deported.

Gemma is not being assisted to have the \$14,000 stolen from her returned or to receive any benefits for the more than a decade of hard work both she and her husband did in Canada. Needless to say, resettling in the Philippines will be difficult especially for the two children who have been torn away from their school and friends.

The Canadian state must be held to account for this crime against Gemma and her family and the tens of thousands of other migrant workers who have been mistreated and had their rights violated.

MacDonald Scott was part of the legal team that supported Gemma's case. Scott says they informed the CBSA that Gemma would cooperate in an investigation into her case but received no response. He notes that Gemma's situation became known because various organizations stood behind her and championed the justice of her case. Many other migrants are just picked up, detained and deported as if they are ghosts and not human beings with rights and historical and personal reasons for their plight. Speaking at the January 25 rally for Gemma and her family, Scott pointed out that when the Liberal government was elected in 2015, Justin Trudeau publicly stated that he was opposed to human trafficking and pledged to do something about it. Scott called on Trudeau "to do the right thing" in the here and now and stop the CBSA deportation proceeding against the Concepcions, which he refused to do.

Through programs such as the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and others, the Canadian state turns workers throughout the world, and in particular from the poor and oppressed countries, into vulnerable fair game to human traffickers and unscrupulous employers in Canada, who view them as disposable objects to exploit. The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) calls on all Canadians to unite and work together for a new direction for the country, where the rights of all are guaranteed without exception. We are one humanity! The rights of all are inviolable! Organize and fight for the New!



Ontario Rally Defends Public Health Care

Thousands Demand Ford Government Improve Not Cut Investments in Health Care



Some 10,000 health care workers and people from all walks of life, from cities and towns around Ontario, converged on Queen's Park April 30 to demand the Ontario government stop its planned draconian cuts to public health care.

Buses came from across southern Ontario and as far away as Ottawa, Timmins, Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie. The Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU)/Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) alone brought 35 buses. Many took time off work to be there.

There were contingents at the rally from health care locals of OCHU/CUPE, the Ontario Nurses' Association, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the Service Employees International Union, Unifor and the Carpenters' Union. They represented many fields in the sector from nurses to paramedics and other first responders to personal support workers, along with students in nursing and other fields. All came to make their voices heard.

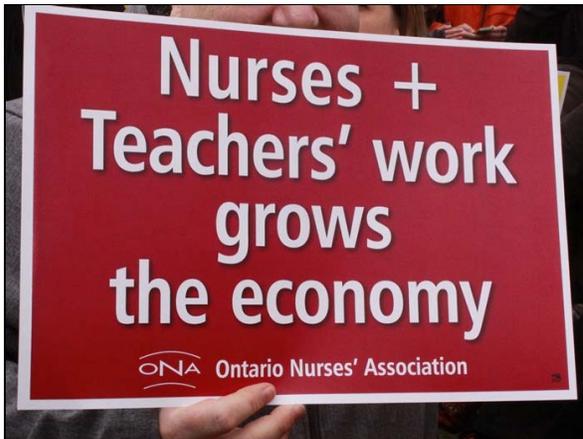


They spoke of the difficult situations they already face due to understaffing and lack of funding of public health care and affirmed their determination to prevent further cuts and privatization and to fight to protect and expand public health care. The health care system belongs to the people of Ontario and we must have a say in how it is run, speakers emphasized.

Health care workers were joined by contingents of other unions representing steelworkers, elementary and secondary school teachers and education workers, postal and food workers and many others.

People who, following the last round of restructuring, formed citizen's committees to save their local hospital services told the crowd that they face a far bigger threat now. The Ford government

has pushed through a new law giving the government and their appointees to the new health care super agency extraordinary powers to restructure, cut, transfer, close and privatize health services. They vowed to stop any new attempts to dismantle their services. A number of the speakers were patients who spoke to their experience with and concerns over mega-mergers and health restructuring.



The Ontario Health Coalition gave the call for the rally and organized townhalls in a number of cities to mobilize for it. "For the first time, more than 150,000 health professionals, nurses, support workers, doctors and tens of thousands of patient advocates are joining together in a health action day, unified in their deep concern that the Ford government intends unprecedented health care privatization," the coalition said in a statement.

Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition stated at the rally "Doug Ford's government has no mandate to impose cuts and privatization of public health care. Not a word of this was breathed in the election." Further she said "Health care belongs to the people of Ontario, we fund it, and we have worked in our communities for a century to build our public hospitals and local health services. Mr. Ford, we are demanding that you improve it as you promised. No to cuts, privatization and mega-mergers. If you try to close down or privatize our local health care services, we will fight these in every community, every step of the way."

Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition stated at the rally







(Photos: TML, CUPE, OFL)

Human-Centred Solutions Demanded for Spring Flooding Devastating Floods in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick

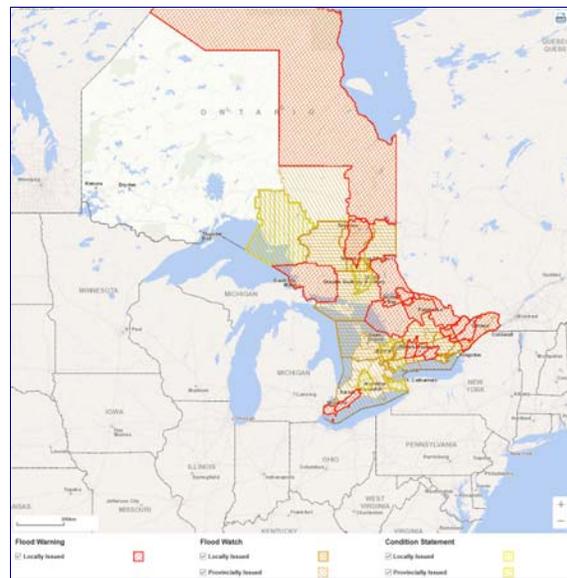
Devastating floods have seriously affected regions of Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario. A provisional report published by Urgences Québec on April 28 said that in Quebec, 6,424 homes were flooded, 3,508 dwellings isolated by water and 9,522 had been evacuated. In New Brunswick, the province's Emergency Management Organization reports that as of May 2, 518 households (1,262 people) have registered with the Red Cross and 141 households (410 people) are being sheltered. In Ontario, while the province itself does not appear to have released any overall figures, federal Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale stated on April 30 that about 1,600

people had been evacuated from their homes, most of whom are from the northern Ontario Kashechewan First Nation on James Bay (see item below).



Quebeckers fight back the flood waters.

Affected areas in New Brunswick are concentrated along the Upper St. John River in the north of the province, and also the Lower St. John River in the south, including Fredericton and Moncton. In Ontario, affected regions include much of the eastern part of the province, especially the Ottawa Valley along the Ottawa River. Quebec has been hit the hardest, with the most affected regions being the Laurentians and the Outaouais. Other affected regions include the Quebec City area, Centre-du-Québec, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Lanaudière, Laval, Mauricie, the Montérégie and Montreal. In the Laurentians, the number of people affected jumped due to the rupture of a dike in Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, which flooded one-third of the municipality. Many emergency measures are being taken by various public services in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick to alleviate the situation and assist the victims.



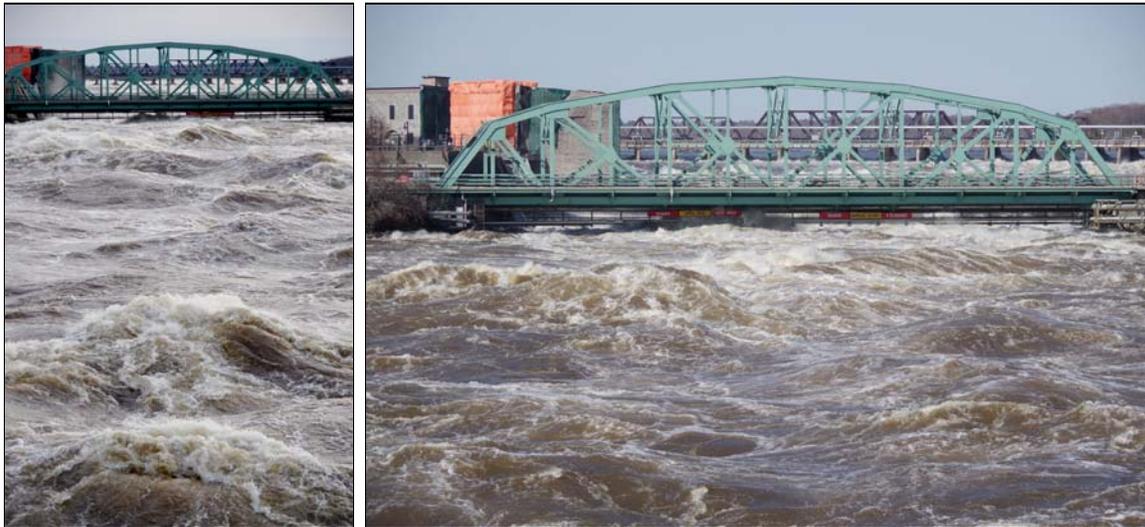
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources map, showing flood warnings and watches issued across the province, May 2, 2019 (click to enlarge).

Tremendous social solidarity is being expressed by the people of these areas and from elsewhere in Canada to help the affected populations and to limit the scope of the floods as much as possible. This inestimable solidarity in this urgent situation shows the character and sentiment of the people to unite and take care of the well-being of all, demonstrating how the people unite to face adversity.

Water levels are now starting to recede in all three affected provinces, however the process of recovery will be arduous, and the situation made more difficult by cynical calculations of

governments, and politicians who approach these disasters in a self-serving manner. For example, Quebec Premier François Legault used the tragedy in people's lives to say that asking taxpayers to foot the bill for disaster relief is unacceptable. Once a certain threshold of financial assistance is exceeded, he said, the victims should move and get out of harm's way. He totally ignored the economic circumstances of many of the victims as well as the role unscrupulous land developers often play in building homes in areas which are flood plains. It is known that some people have not even overcome the effects of previous floods. Not only must everyone receive the help necessary but measures must also be put in place to protect the shoreline municipalities as much as possible so that they can maintain themselves.

The social solidarity, measures to protect the low-lying communities near rivers and lakes from the effects of climate change, disaster relief efforts and the fight against climate change together make up an integral part of modern living that puts the well-being of all in first place.



The Chaudière Bridge, one of five bridges connecting Gatineau to Ottawa, has been closed since 6:00 am on April 28, 2019. The oldest and lowest of the inter-provincial bridges, it will only be reopened once the waters recede enough to assess damage from the high and fast-moving water.



Transport Canada photo of flooding in Pointe Gatineau at the confluence of the Ottawa and Gatineau Rivers.

(Photos: J. Masson ,TML.)

Rally for Kashechewan First Nation Demands Federal and Provincial Governments Permanently Relocate Community



The Kashechewan First Nation community from Northern Ontario demonstrated on Parliament Hill on Tuesday, April 30 to demand that the Trudeau government respect its promise to relocate the community, following the tripartite agreement to that effect signed between the Kashechewan First Nation and the Ontario provincial and federal governments in 2017.

Many children and youth were present at the rally, along with many who came out to express their support. One young person spoke out to say that the youth of Kashechewan want a bright future, but face the insecurity every spring of having their lives uprooted as they are scattered to various evacuation centres across Ontario. Other speakers expressed their profound sympathies with all those facing the flooding in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Another underscored the urgency of the situation, pointing to the youth, who were supposed to be in school, who every year have their education disrupted and now have had to travel to Ottawa to demand that the promises made to them be respected and that they be treated with the dignity they deserve.



Kashechewan is located on the northern shore of the Albany River, where it meets the western

shore of James Bay. Every year, as the ice on the river breaks up, the flow of water into the bay is obstructed, at a time when water flow from melting snow is increasing. The people have to declare a state of emergency due to spring floods and be evacuated, as they have done every year for the past 17 years.

This year, the state of emergency was declared on April 14. The start date for the evacuations of 2,500 people was moved up from April 21 to April 15 due to rapidly melting snow. During these evacuations, commercial and military planes and helicopters airlift out the most vulnerable residents to other northern communities, such as Timmins, Wawa, Smooth Rock Falls, Fort Frances, Matachewan, and Kapuskasing, some as far south as Stratford. Typically they are unable to return home for weeks or even as long as two months. In 2014, it was estimated the evacuation operation cost \$21 million. This figure does not include the funds spent on the inspection, cleaning and repair of buildings damaged in the flood.

The Kashechewan First Nation and the Fort Albany First Nation (located on the southern shore of the Albany River) were originally a single Cree community that became divided over a religious dispute instigated by missionaries. Roman Catholics moved to the south side of the river and Anglicans went to the north. In 1957, an Indian Agent arrived and "recommended" that those on the north shore relocate themselves, closer to the Hudson's Bay store and so that barges bringing supplies could more easily reach them. This "recommendation" was rejected because, as Cree elders pointed out, that "recommended" location was the lowest point in the area and was known to flood. The government nonetheless began to build a settlement at this low point. Two months later, the government sent in the RCMP to enforce the "recommendation."^{[1][2]} The people of Kashechewan have faced the danger of spring floods ever since.

2017 Agreement

On March 31, 2017, the government of Canada, the government of Ontario and Kashechewan First Nation signed a framework agreement for relocation of the First Nation Community, to move them up river. A majority of the community had voted in favour of such an agreement before it was signed. According to a press release issued on the day of the agreement, "the tripartite agreement commits the parties to the development of an action plan to support the short-, medium- and long-term sustainability of the community, with a focus on improving outcomes in priority areas including housing, socio-economic sustainability, health programs and facilities, infrastructure development, and schools and community facilities.

"This collaborative initiative supports a better future for the people of Kashechewan First Nation and will include consideration of options for relocation of the community.



"A steering committee composed of representatives of Kashechewan First Nation, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada and Ontario's Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will provide general oversight and guidance on the action plan when developed. The committee will provide an annual report to parties on the progress made under this Framework Agreement."

Indigenous Services Minister Seamus O'Regan told reporters on April 30 that he could not offer a specific timeline for the move, but said the government is working with Kashechewan to make it happen as soon as possible. Minister O'Regan was reported by the CBC as saying that the federal government is working to secure the land from the Ontario provincial government. Once that task is complete, a road into the site will have to be built and a survey of the land completed. That will be followed by a consultation period, during which plans for the new town will be drawn up.

On April 28, the Kashechewan situation came up in the Ontario Legislature during question period. In response to questions from the NDP, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Affairs Greg Rickford said "There is a plan in place for Kashechewan so they don't have to be displaced year in and year out as a result of the flooding and the location that community currently is in." No actual information on that plan has been forthcoming.

The refusal to relocate the people of Kashechewan in a timely manner underscores the longstanding injustices against Kashechewan. In 2005, the community declared a water crisis due to E. coli contamination. Such water contamination resulting in boil water advisories, which many other Indigenous communities also face, can be the result of flooding. Meanwhile, to say the youth are having their education disrupted by the spring floods is a severe understatement. Faced with the impoverishment and hopelessness imposed on them by Canada's colonial relations with the First Nations, youth in Kashechewan, like other Indigenous youth across the country, often resort to suicide to escape their pain.

As people across Canada are facing the devastation of spring floods, with the possibility of the situation worsening due to climate change, the ongoing ordeal of the people of Kashechewan over several decades must not be forgotten and the federal and provincial governments must be held to account for this criminal negligence.



Notes

1. "How Kashechewan Created a Political Stampede," Julius Strauss, *Globe and Mail*, November 4, 2005.
2. *Invisible North: The Search for Answers on a Troubled Reserve*, Alexandra Shimo, Dundurn Press (Toronto, 2016).

(Photos: TML)

Defence of the Principle of Sovereignty of All Countries

Cuba and Its Friends Boldly Affirm Its Right to Be



As the U.S. government steps up its irrational attempt to isolate and suffocate Cuba, the revolutionary Cuban people and their friends from around the world rallied on the occasion of May Day to affirm that no matter what, Cuba is not alone, and the U.S. will never achieve its reactionary aim. This militant stand by the Cuban people and the fraternal support of the peoples of the world is more important than ever as the U.S. imperialists unleash a new campaign of hostility against Cuba and Venezuela.

The highlight of May Day was the iconic million-strong convergence and march to Revolution Square in Havana, as well as the May Day marches along central avenues and plazas across the country. The marches reaffirmed workers' support for the socialist character of the Revolution, agreements reached at the 21st Congress of the Federation of Cuban Workers, as well as the new Constitution proclaimed on April 10 before the National Assembly of People's Power. Also celebrated this year is the 500th anniversary of Cuba's capital Havana.

Across the country, health care contingents led marches in recognition of the results they achieved in 2018, including an infant mortality rate of 4.0 per 1,000 live births, revitalization of the family doctor program with a return to its foundational concepts, and a life expectancy of close to 80 years. Included in these contingents were the nearly 8,000 medical professionals who served in the Brazilian Mas Médicos program until they had to return home after being attacked by President Jair Bolsonaro. Bringing up the rear of the contingents were professors and students from medical schools, including the Latin American School of Medicine that trains so many youth from other countries.

Santiago Badía González, Secretary General of the National Union of Health Workers, explained to *Granma International*, that May Day is a workers' celebration and that health care contingents and other workers "are going to march in defence of our achievements, as a reaffirmation of socialism, and support for the historic leaders of the Revolution and President Miguel Díaz-Canel."

21st Congress of Federation of Cuban Workers



Session of 21st Congress of Federation of Cuban Workers, April 23, 2019.

In the days leading up to May Day, representatives from more than 16 countries and some 30 organizations with ties to the Federation of Cuban Workers (CTC) participated in activities leading up to May Day and the 21st Congress of the Cuban trade union movement in Havana from April 20 to 24. In addition to listening to the discussion of labour issues and concerns, they completed a full schedule, including visits to production facilities to interact directly with workers.



CTC Secretary General of the Ulises Guilarte (second from left) and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel next to him, at the CTC Congress, April 22, 2019.

"Our main objective is to bring people to see how we are developing the country and the circumstances in which we are doing it. We hope they pass along what they have learned, because news about Cuba is scarce and what is published is against the Revolution," Secretary General of the CTC, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento told the press.

He added that the main goal is to show how workers exercise union rights and that visitors freely roam the streets, listening to Cubans' opinions. "We want them to see the damage caused by the criminal economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States, mainly in the shortages the population faces and the lack of resources."

Guilarte, also a member of the Communist Party of Cuba Political Bureau, noted that every year, solidarity groups around the world organize actions in support of Cuba, demanding that their governments vote for an end to the blockade in the United Nations General Assembly, given the impact suffered by the Cuban people in terms of supplies, means of production, raw materials, and spare parts.

He noted that recently the tone used by interventionist President Donald Trump has risen, with new sanctions imposed on governments seeking to build anti-capitalist societies. He mentioned the sanctions announced by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence on 34 vessels owned or operated by Venezuela's state oil company PDVSA that transports oil to Cuba, as well as two additional companies.

Guilarte said the CTC Congress succeeded in generating ideas to improve efficiency, the indispensable basis of economic progress in Cuba. He highlighted the official statement issued by delegates in solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, with all peoples around the world fighting just causes, for peace, independence, sovereignty and against the neo-liberal and discriminatory policies imposed by the U.S.

World Solidarity Meeting



On May 2 at the Palace of Conventions in Cuba, more than 1,000 activists from Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia, the U.S. and Canada converged for the World Solidarity Meeting with Cuba.

Ulises Guilarte, Secretary General of the CTC, in his opening remarks to the gathering said that coming to Cuba in these times is a test of courage and political commitment, noting that some had "violated" the extra-territorial laws of the U.S. blockade to be there. He highlighted the interventionist actions of the U.S. government and the intensification of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, with the enforcement of Title III of the *Helms-Burton Act*. He stressed the importance of maintaining and defending "our social projects and not bend to the orders of the empire."



During the meeting, which this year was directed against war and for world peace, Guilarte reiterated Cuba's steadfast solidarity with Venezuela, while demanding the freedom of former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Venezuela's Ambassador to Cuba Adán Chávez affirmed that in spite U.S. interference in his country, Venezuelans have resisted and will continue to resist.

Fernando Gonzalez, President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), stressed the importance of activists who organize international solidarity with Cuba, and that Cuba is relying on these friends during the current circumstances. He also invited those present to take part in the Hemispheric Anti-imperialist Meeting of Solidarity, for Democracy and Against Neo-Liberalism in November in Havana, that will call on solidarity movements, trade unionists, youth, and students, as well as all sectors committed to blocking reaction and retrogression in the region.

The international delegations shared their just demands for social justice and spoke out against the U.S.-led aggression against Venezuela, and media campaigns designed to undermine the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. They also expressed solidarity with Argentine trade unions in their fight against neo-liberalism, and called for the freedom of former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva.

(Photos: Cubadebate, Prensa Latina)



Venezuelan People Standing with Their Bolivarian Government and Armed Forces Repel Opposition Coup Attempt



May 1, 2019 rally in Caracas, Venezuela.

On May 1, it was reported that hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan workers and supporters of the Bolivarian revolution filled the streets of cities around the country in what is reported to have been one of the country's biggest mobilizations in years. May Day took on extra meaning this year coming just one day after the people's forces played a decisive role in repelling the latest attempt by foreign-backed opposition forces to overthrow the country's constitutional government, coming out in their tens of thousands to surround the presidential palace and seat of the Bolivarian government as soon as news broke that a coup attempt with the involvement of military forces was underway.

In the early hours of April 30 the opposition leader and self-proclaimed "president" Juan Guaidó sent out a message calling his supporters into the streets, making it sound like a significant section of Venezuela's military had switched sides and taken over a military base in Caracas. But the truth was something else. Except for a very small number of officers who broke ranks, the Bolivarian Armed Forces stood firm in defence of the constitution and remained loyal to their Commander-in-Chief, President Nicolás Maduro. What's more, the handful of senior officers involved in organizing the mutiny lied to their subordinates to trick them into taking part in their treasonous mission, claiming it was for a different, legitimate purpose. When it became clear to those being manipulated what they would be part of, the vast majority wanted nothing to do with it, and took off. One National Guard member was filmed testifying about what had taken place and who put them up to it.

The response of the working people to the treachery that unfolded on April 30 was swift and decisive. They rose to repudiate the coup forces and their foreign sponsors by surrounding Miraflores Palace, determined to defend the right of all Venezuelans to live in peace, as a sovereign and independent people, free to elect governments of their choosing and to chart their own course without bowing to imperialist threats and interference.



In response to attempted coup April 30, 2019, working people surround Miraflores Palace.

The only liberation that ended up taking place as part of "Operation Freedom" as the coup attempt was called, was that of Leopoldo López, Juan Guaidó's mentor and leader of the Popular Will party that both belong to, who was sprung from house arrest, allegedly with the help of turncoat officers of the National Intelligence Service.



Within a few hours of being summoned to the streets, a large crowd of opposition supporters that gathered in an affluent area of Caracas had dispersed, being blocked from marching on Miraflores to confront government supporters and security forces protecting it.

By early afternoon a handful of renegade armed forces members, a few opposition politicians and a couple of hundred vandals commanded by López and Guaidó, having seized control of nothing, found themselves alone and cut off on the overpass of a freeway, some firing weapons,

others hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails at the nearby military base before scurrying off to save their skins. The escaped convict López first headed for the Chilean Embassy then to the residence of the Spanish ambassador where he and his family remain as "guests." Twenty-five members of the military took refuge in the Brazilian Embassy.

Despite the debacle he presided over on April 30, Guaidó called on his supporters to rally in the streets again on May 1 and every day after that to continue with the "final phase" of "Operation Freedom" saying they should stage rolling strikes building to an eventual general strike. While an opposition counter-demonstration to the massive Workers' Day march led by President Maduro did take place on May 1, it was reported by observers to have fallen far short of being the "largest march in Venezuela's history" that Guaidó called for.

What the call for ongoing opposition street actions likely signals, despite the rhetoric of Guaidó and those he takes direction from about a "peaceful transition," is that the foreign and domestic oligarchs behind the cruel hybrid war being waged against the Venezuelan people are planning to unleash a new round of destabilizing street violence like the deadly "guarimbas" of 2014 and 2017. The aim will be to generate casualties so Nicolás Maduro can be blamed for "brutally repressing peaceful democracy activists"-- no matter what the facts are -- to provide a justification for whatever new aggressive moves the U.S. and its appeasers decide to make.

U.S. Responds to Failed Coup Attempt



Bolivarian armed forces ratify their allegiance to President Maduro, May 2, 2019.

The Trump administration showed itself to be intimately involved with the coup attempt in many ways. When its efforts failed to produce the desired result, with Venezuela's Minister of Defence and other high officials spurning U.S. attempts to buy them off as if they were mercenaries with no honour, the White House ramped up its psychological warfare. The serial liars John Bolton and Elliot Abrams began spinning stories of a "deal" they had allegedly gotten for Maduro to step down until Russia stepped in and told him not to, and other tales about widespread mistrust and looming betrayals in government and military circles.

For his part, President Trump chose to blame Cuba for the inability of the U.S. and forces it commands to make headway in overthrowing the government of Nicolás Maduro. He threatened Cuba with a "full and complete embargo" and "the highest-level sanctions" if it did not stop what

he called its "military interference" in Venezuela, ignoring what Cuba has declared many times over: that it has no troops in Venezuela, and that there are no Cubans taking part in military or security operations there, which, it adds, U.S. intelligence agencies well know.

Lima Group Responds

The illegitimacy and gangsterism of the Lima Group and its members, including Canada, has also been on full display. After a hastily organized teleconference on April 30, ten of its members plus Guaidó's envoy claiming to represent Venezuela, issued a statement expressing their "full support for the constitutional and popular process undertaken by the Venezuelan people, under the leadership of the interim president, Juan Guaidó, to restore democracy in Venezuela," insisting that the attempt by Guaidó and Leopoldo López to put themselves at the head of an armed insurrection to overthrow the country's constitutional government, and possibly incite a civil war, could not be considered a coup d'etat!

A second statement, issued at an emergency meeting held on May 3 in Lima, following the same twisted logic, claims that the failed coup was undertaken to "peacefully restore the rule of law" in Venezuela. It also attempts, without evidence, to associate the "regime" of Nicolás Maduro as well as his family members and supporters with all manner of criminal activity, including being a "threat" for supposedly offering protection to "terrorist groups operating inside Colombian territory." The statement goes on, obviously trying to portray Venezuela as an outlaw state and make a case for the UN Security Council to authorize action against it, alluding, without any evidence, to Venezuela supposedly attempting to "destabilize Colombian institutions," "threaten the life and safety of President Ivan Duque" and to "undermine regional security." Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza recently warned about Duque attempting to mount a "false positive" against Venezuela in this way -- the implication being that it would be used to justify a military intervention against Venezuela.

A new element introduced in the Lima Group's May 3 statement is its agreement "to undertake all necessary actions in order for Cuba to participate in the search for a solution to the Venezuelan crisis." The same day, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted a news item on his web page indicating that he had on behalf of the Lima Group discussed "the ongoing crisis in Venezuela" with President Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba, and "underscor[ed] the desire to see free and fair elections and the constitution upheld." Referring to their discussion about Venezuela, President Díaz-Canel said, "I emphasized the need for dialogue with President Maduro based on respect for the sovereignty of Venezuela and international law, without threats or foreign intervention."

CARICOM Responds

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) also released a statement on May 3 in which it said "[T]he solution to the crisis in Venezuela should be a peaceful internal process that avoids the threat or use of force." It said CARICOM "will continue to monitor the situation and remains convinced that the principles of non-interference and non-intervention in the affairs of states, respect for sovereignty, the constitutional framework, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy must be upheld."

CARICOM said it would continue to support diplomatic efforts such as the Montevideo Mechanism and would also continue to be in contact with other interested parties to encourage efforts to bring a peaceful solution to the crisis.

(With files from Venezuelanalysis, teleSUR, Miami Herald, Global Affairs Canada. Photos: AVN, Prensa Presidencial, R. Canan)



Announcement of Withdrawal from Organization of American States

- Bolivarian Government of Venezuela -



"Adios OEA" rally in Apure, April 27, 2019, celebrates Venezuela leaving the Organization of American States.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, loyal to its republican and democratic principles, and in respect to the National Constitution and International Law, announces to the international community and the peoples of the world, the breaking of the chains that bind us to the dictatorship imposed by the United States within the Organization of American States (OAS).

With the denunciation of the Charter of the Organization of American States made by the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on April 27, 2017, in the framework of Article 143, as from today, no instrument signed and/or issued by the OAS shall have any legal or political effect for the Venezuelan State and its institutions.

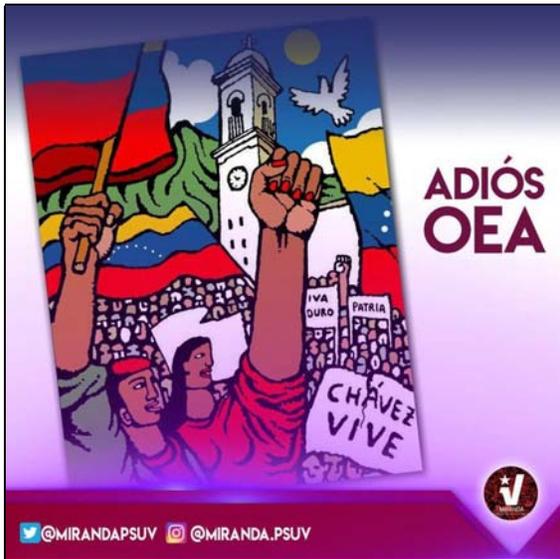


The Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, in exercise of its political independence and its sovereign rights, has denounced to the international community the dysfunction of the OAS, which is characterized by the infringement of International Law; the systematic transgression of its founding Charter; the procedural fraud, political subordination of its bureaucracy to the interests of the United States administration; the programmed loss of the political pluralism in the American continent, under a colonial and supremacist vision; and the permanent injury of the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, among others, of its member States.

A group of satellite governments, led by the United States, has sacrificed the fundamental Charter of the OAS that rules the relations among the countries of the hemisphere, and violated all its

historical operation rules and practices. As a result, a dictatorship has been imposed within the OAS, violating the rights of its 34 member States and allowing, promoting, facilitating and actively participating in the destabilization of the Venezuelan democracy.

Such group, which violated the OAS rules, has validated the foreign aggression, the illegal implementation of unilateral coercive measures, the threat about the use of force by third States, the economical sabotage and suffocation against our nation and the seizure, forfeiture and plundering of the Republic's assets.



Also, said group of satellites governments has instigated the repudiation of the National Constitution, the democratic institutions and legitimate elected authorities, inciting violence, chaos and trying to provoke a civil war in our nation, by corrupting the OAS to the extent of making of it a conspiracy instrument for a foreign military intervention against our people.

The dictatorship within the OAS is a threat against the regional and international peace and security. In this context, the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela alerts the international community on future actions that such warmongering group intends to execute against our nation, in open violation of International Law.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is grateful to an important group of countries within the Organization that rejected the abuses and violations perpetrated by a dictatorial group, and showed respect to International Law in defense of sovereignty, self-determination and independence of all States. We assure to these sister nations that our government and people shall not rest in the defense of their freedom and assurance of peace.

Today, the people and government of Venezuela break the chains of the racist Monroe Doctrine and ratify that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is irrevocably free and independent, and its moral heritage, as well as its values of freedom, equality, justice and international peace have their roots in Simón Bolívar's Doctrine.

In Caracas, Cradle of Liberators, the 27 of April, 2019

(Photos: O Vivas, PSUV Miranda. MPPRE News)

Vietnam Ancestral Global Day and National Reunification Day

Longstanding Friendship Between the Canadian and Vietnamese Peoples Celebrated at Toronto Conference

The Canada Vietnam Society (CVS) and the York Centre for Asian Research hosted a one-day conference on April 30, called "Vietnam: Tradition and Development," to celebrate Vietnam Ancestral Global Day. Ancestral Global Day is commemorated in Vietnam to honour the Hùng Kings, who founded the Vietnamese nation almost 4,000 years ago and to celebrate their legacy in

the modern Vietnam today. This year, besides in Canada, the commemoration was held in France, Laos, Poland, Japan, Thailand, Russia and other countries.



The event was held at York University. Dr. Julie Nguyen, a CVS board member, welcomed everyone and informed those attending that this was the first time that a celebration to commemorate the Hùng Kings is being held in Canada, making it an historic occasion. She pointed out that Vietnam Ancestral Global Day not only marks the historical beginnings of the Vietnamese nation, but celebrates the achievements of modern Vietnam, and in Canada it highlights the friendship between the Vietnamese and Canadian peoples. She announced that the conference would begin with a ceremony to honour these ancestors, followed by two panel discussions: the first "Local History, Global Future" and the second, "Canada-Vietnam Business and Educational Co-operation."



Dr. Julie Nguyen introduces the second panel.

Dr. Phouc Dang, the Chair of the CVS board, read a powerful poem to open the conference which pays tribute to the Hùng Kings and pledges the present generation of Vietnamese in the homeland and in the diaspora, to uphold their legacy of the independence and sovereignty of Vietnam. He later presented a slide show, providing an overview of Vietnam history and the role of the Hùng Kings.

In the first panel, a member of the Canada-Vietnam Trade Council highlighted the emerging areas of the Vietnamese economy today and the increasing trade relations between Vietnam and Canada. She pointed out that Vietnam is a highly educated society with a hard-working people, and given that it is Canada's largest partner in ASEAN, there are many more opportunities for business collaboration. She hoped more trade and opportunities for both Vietnamese and Canadians will emerge with the recent Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Speaking on behalf of the CVS, Philip Fernandez highlighted the friendship between the Canadian and Vietnamese peoples and noted that this relationship goes back to the time of Vietnam's national liberation war and the fight to reunify the country. He denounced the *Journey to Freedom Act* adopted by the Harper government in 2015 which distorts and falsifies the history of the heroic Vietnamese people and their defeat of the U.S. imperialists. He also expressed the support of CVS for the initiative of the Vietnamese Women's Entrepreneurial Association to oppose the flying of the colonial flag of the defeated U.S.-puppet south Vietnamese regime as a provocation against the Canadian and Vietnamese peoples.

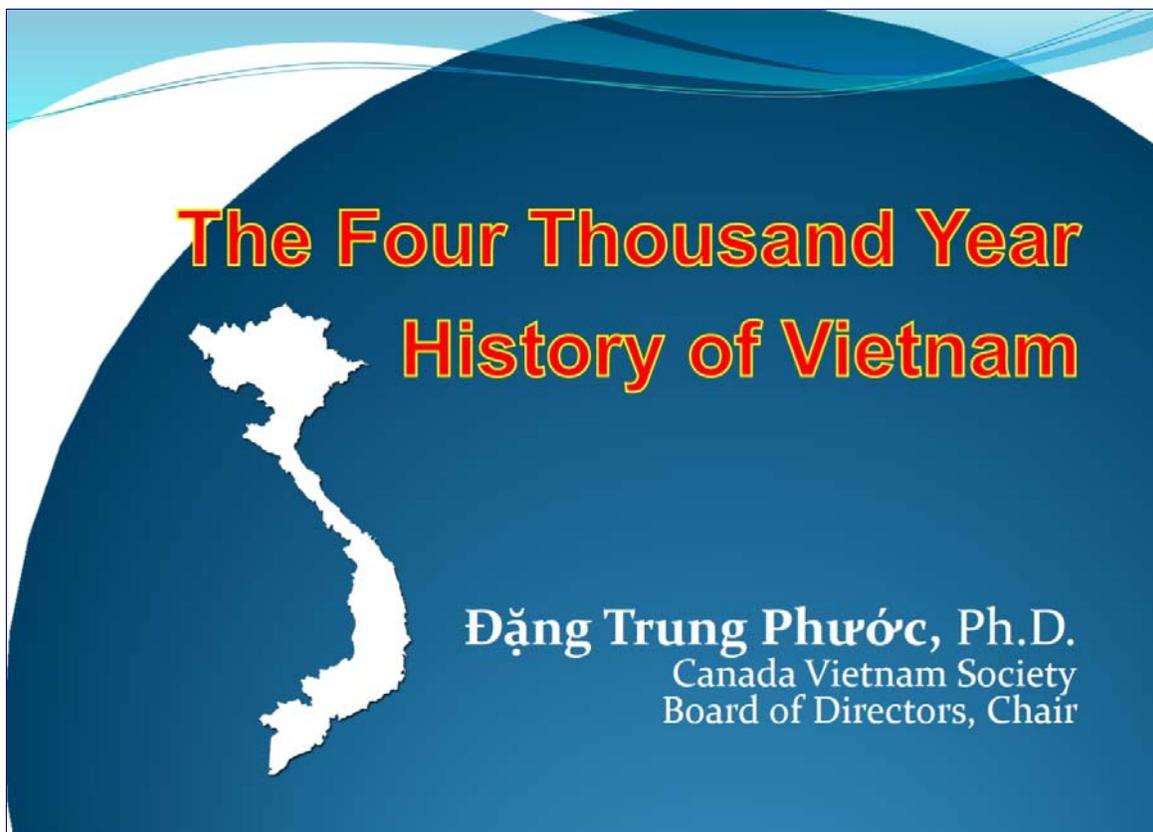
In the afternoon panel, Dr. Lorna Wright and Dr. Elena Caprioni from the Schulich School of Business at York provided information of the various projects being undertaken to foster academic collaboration between the two countries. Dr. Wright also expressed hope that the current volume of Vietnam-Canada economic activity, valued at \$6 billion, can be further developed and enhanced, given the economic stability and opportunity that exists in Vietnam.

Lily Tang, Executive Director of the Vietnamese Women Entrepreneur's Association, stated that Vietnam is a society of young people who have great entrepreneurial spirit. She noted that the more than 20,000 Vietnamese students studying in Canada are looking to make contributions to their own country and to Canada while they live here. This spirit, she said, bodes well for the future of both countries and peoples.

The organizers of the conference thanked everyone for their participation and expressed enthusiasm for the strengthening of relations between Vietnam and Canada.

Presentation by Dr. Phuoc Dang on the Four-Thousand Year History of Vietnam

Click image to view the presentation in your browser as a PDF.



Flag-Raising Ceremony in Quảng Trị Marks National Reunification Day



The national flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is raised at the Hiền Lương-Bến Hải historic site in Vinh Linh District, Quảng Trị. The Bến Hải River, located at the 17th parallel, was part of a demilitarized zone that separated the country during the U.S. War in Vietnam.

A flag-raising ceremony was held at the Hiền Lương-Bến Hải historical relic site in Vĩnh Linh district, the central province of Quảng Trị, on April 30 to mark the 44th anniversary of the Liberation of South Vietnam and National Reunification Day (April 30, 1975).

As part of the national reunification festival co-organized by *Nhan dan (People's) Daily*, the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) and the People's Committee of the provincial committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the event also celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Dien Bien Phu victory which in 1954 ended French colonial rule in Vietnam and the 47th anniversary of the liberation of Quảng Trị (May 1, 1972).

The event was attended by Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister Truong Hoa Binh; Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee (CPVCC) and Head of the CPVCC's Commission for Internal Affairs Phan Dinh Trac; *Nhan Dan* Editor-in-Chief and Chairman of the Vietnam Journalists' Association Thuan Huu; and VNA General Director Nguyen Duc Loi, among others.

Hiền Lương Bridge that spans the Bến Hải River, which divided North and South Vietnam during the Vietnam War, is only 178 metres long but it took 21 years for Vietnamese people from the North and the South to be united. The bridge is witness to the Vietnamese people's fierce but glorious struggle and a reflection of their desire for and belief in victory. Relic sites located on both banks of the river have been recognized as special national historical relics.

Quảng Trị was one of the most devastated localities during the war, by thousands of tonnes of bombs and shells. The province was also well known for the fierce 81-day-and-night battle at the ancient Quảng Trị Citadel.

In his opening remarks, Secretary of the provincial Party Committee Nguyen Van Hung highlighted major achievements Quảng Trị has recorded over the past years across spheres, from economy to social affairs and national defence and security.

The flag-raising ceremony was followed by a Bai Choi singing performance at the southern bank of the Hiền Lương-Bến Hải special national historical relic site, a boat race on the Bến Hải River and an inaugural ceremony of the project to upgrade the southern bank of the site.

Delegates paid tribute to fallen soldiers at the National Road 9 Martyrs' Cemetery, Truong Son Martyrs' Cemetery.

The evening of April 29, an art program entitled "Aspiration for Unification" was held at the historical site.

On this occasion, VNA General Director Nguyen Duc Loi presented 1.8 billion VND (U.S.\$77,400) to Quảng Trị to build three classrooms at the kindergarten in Trieu Tai commune, Trieu Phong district.

Nhan Dan newspaper and the Vietnam Electricity also presented 1 billion VND (U.S.\$43,000) to local social policy beneficiaries.

Addressing the event, Thuan Huu, who is also deputy head of the CPVPCC's Communication and Education Commission, said that the Geneva Agreement defined the Bến Hải River on the 17th Parallel to be the temporary military division line 65 years ago and Quảng Trị was an extremely fierce battlefield.

The people of Quảng Trị had to endure many sacrifices and hardships. Forty-seven years after Liberation Day, people in Quảng Trị have promoted their resilient tradition to build a more prosperous province with remarkable achievements in economics, society, and security and defence, he noted.

The art program featured songs and dances to honour the fighting spirit of the Vietnamese army and people and the aspiration for national unification.

(VNA. Photos VNA.)

Supplement
May Day Around the World
• **Militant Actions Defend Rights and Uphold the Dignity of Labour**

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