



Vol. 10: No.89: Feb. 01, 2011

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**Our Mission**

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents a growing number of area residents of diverse backgrounds brought together over the Iraqi crisis.

We support multilateral action for non-violent conflict resolution, human rights, ecological integrity for the planet and international law, through education and dialogue locally and globally.

We encourage everyone's participation as we strive for peace and justice to build a better world for future generations.

**The Boundary Peace Initiative meets: 2nd & 4th Thursdays @ 7 pm Selkirk College.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **No Boundaries Film Festival February, 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>.** The BPI will provide lunch and asks **our members to donate food.** Call Laura @ 442-0434 to arrange drop off or pick up.

Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1967

**What do you think?**

**Fact:** The City of Grand Forks is a member of the Mayors 4 Peace that works for Nuclear Disarmament and a Nuclear Weapons Free World and is a declared Nuclear Free Zone.

**Fact:** The City, on behalf of its citizens, sells over \$200,000 of slag to Pacific Abrasives.

**Fact:** Pacific Abrasives ships 75% of its sand blasting materials to the US.

**Fact:** The US military buys 37% of its sand blasting needs from Pacific Abrasives for the Pacific Fleet, which includes nuclear powered submarines equipped with Nuclear Weapons.

**Question:** Is the City violating its own resolutions by supplying the US Navy's Pacific Fleet?

**Question:** Are we then complicit in the Nuclear Threat and the US drive for empire by supplying the US Military?

**Send** your thoughts on how we could/ should address this and other issues you may have. All comments are welcome and encouraged so that we can explore our options, opinions and ideas together locally, nationally and internationally.

**What** are your thoughts on the situation in Egypt and the Middle East given recent developments?

**Land mail:** Box 2572, Grand Forks, B.C., V0H 1H0.  
**Email:** [l4peace@telus.net](mailto:l4peace@telus.net).

**G8/G20: Alex Atamanenko MP Responds to Arrests:**

November 10, 2010  
Ottawa, ON

To: Hon. Vic Toews, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Building, 13<sup>th</sup> floor  
340 Laurier Ave. West  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0P8

Dear Minister Toews,

I have just received a disturbing account by a young woman from my riding regarding her experience at the G20 Summit in Toronto.

Enclosed please find her detailed explanation of her arrest.

It is important to state that I am not writing to discuss the Summit itself, but rather feel it is imperative that you see firsthand how a young Canadian woman was treated by the authorities in Toronto. Whether we agree or not with her reason for being there is immaterial, what it is important however is the flagrant abuse of her democratic rights as a Canadian citizen.

As you read her account I am certain that you will be sickened and appalled at the treatment she received. This is not something that we expect from authorities of a democratic country such as Canada.

This is what happened: As she was reaching to put on her gas mask (having heard that tear gas was being unleashed), she was violently grabbed and her face was smashed into a brick building.

(Continued page 2)

(From page 1) **G8/G20:**

Her lip was split open and she started bleeding. Painful zip ties were put on with police swearing and making other derogatory comments. Being charged with “a breach of peace”, she was taken to the temporary detention centre at the Toronto Film Studio. Her pleas to use the toilet were ignored and she was taken to an empty cage and belt removed. When permitted to use the toilet, she had to do so in front of police who mocked her and made sexual insinuations. She was stripped searched and told that her nose ring would be ripped out, and then spent 12 – 13 hours alone in a cage. She was cold, hungry and thirsty and told that if she wanted a drink, she could use the toilet; no blanket was permitted. Further mocking and insulting comments were made by the police officers.

When you read her story you will see other details of this humiliating inhumane treatment. In my wildest dreams I never thought that I would see this abuse of human rights take place in Canada.

Minister, those responsible must be punished and this type of sadistic treatment must never be allowed to happen again. Many have fought and died so that we can enjoy freedom in a democratic and secure society.

It is our collective responsibility as members of the Parliament of Canada to ensure that it respected by our law enforcement officers and all Canadians

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,  
Alex Atamanenko, MP  
BC Southern Interior

## **THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN CANADA: Dec. 22, 2010**

One of the hallmarks of a democratic state is its commitment to free, public and political expression.

Indeed, no society can call itself truly democratic if it does not guarantee its citizens the inalienable rights to gather, communicate their opinion and demonstrate their support for or against any political position they wish.

(Continued next column)



(From last column) **G8/G20:**

If these assertions are true, Canada’s behavior during the G20 Summit held this summer in Toronto casts serious doubt on the current state of democracy in this country.

June 26 to 28, 2010 saw the largest mass arrests in Canada’s history.

Without warning or cause, innocent bystanders and peaceful protesters were encircled by police and imprisoned in cages. Sleeping students were awakened at gunpoint, kicked in the ribs and paraded before the media in handcuffs as they were marched off to jail cells.

Police illegally searched people and seized their property at will. Cell phones were taken and police openly scrolled through people’s phone records and read their emails while people in detention were subjected to base humiliations.

Racist, sexist and violent taunts and threats were spewed by guards at those detained.

I have personally communicated with three young people caught up in this flagrant abuse of power. Becky Russell, formally of Grand Forks, and two members of the UBC Kelowna Student Council, Grayson Lepp and Kirk Chavarie who related to me how they were awoken at gun point and arrested.

Months later, when the State was compelled to establish the grounds upon which it acted, charges were withdrawn against almost every one of the 1100 people it arrested. In the end, several thousand people were wholly deprived of their right to express their political beliefs while world leaders gathered in Toronto

Just as disturbing is the fact that the Harper Conservatives have been openly contemptuous of every attempt to shed light on these flagrant breaches. They have refused to acknowledge that abuses occurred, tried to frustrate efforts to get at the truth, and engaged in a shameful attempt to blame our citizens for the excesses of the police.

My colleague Don Davies, NDP Public Safety critic has spearheaded efforts to determine who was responsible for these outrageous actions, and to hold them accountable.

(Continued page 3)

(From page 2)) **G8/G20:**

Through motion filed in July and September, and over the negative votes of the government members, he and other members of the opposition secured five days of hearings before the Public Safety Committee.

Appearing as a witness, Public Safety Minister, Vic Toews rebuffed every suggestion that breaches even occurred.

Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair admitted that 90 police officers were found to have covered up their name and badge numbers while carrying out their duties in flagrant violations of TPS rules and the Chief's own instructions. Questions regarding why his officers failed to get a proper warrant before bursting into the U of T gym, why they pulled guns on sleeping students and who ordered the dawn raid remain unanswered.

Perhaps most alarming of all has been the clear rejection by the Harper Conservatives of the notion that it is their responsibility as elected representatives to hold the police accountable for their violations of our Constitutional and democratic rights.

Every government witness elected and otherwise, asserted that the police actions taken during the G20 were the result of "operational decisions" of the police that were "not the government's business". According to them, we have no choice but to watch our rights be trampled, and then let some ill-defined, poorly resourced and underpowered police complaint commissioner uphold our most cherished democratic entitlements.

This is nonsense.

What clearly happened this summer was one of the worst civil rights abuses our country has seen in decades. Our elected officials should be outraged and calling every single responsible official to account immediately for these outrageous and flagrant abuses of power.

After all, our Constitutional rights are not privileges. We have a right to expect that the police forces in this country are subservient to the Constitution and the political representatives we elect to uphold our democratic rights.

This is what distinguishes a democratic nation from a police state.

I call upon the Prime Minister to conduct a full public enquiry into the violations of basic democratic rights at the G20 Summit.

*Alex Atamanenko is the MP for the Southern Interior of BC.*



## **Canadian Boat to Gaza campaign is legal, ethical, and necessary:**

December 31, 2010

By: David Heap and Derrick O'Keefe

The Canadian Boat to Gaza initiative continues to be a target for a [smear campaign](#) that has little regard for law or facts. Rather incredibly, the executive of the University of British Columbia's Alma Mater Society has subjected a routine donation for our campaign from the student Social Justice Centre to an "[investigation](#)" into potential "links to terrorism" A final decision on this so-called investigation is expected at the January 12 AMS meeting.

This episode in part reflects the growing desperation of those who seek to justify Israel's ongoing collective punishment of Gaza. Exactly two years ago, the world's eyes were opened to Israeli brutality during a three-week attack on Gaza that claimed more than 1,400 lives.

The question as to whether bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza can be viewed as legally constituting "support for terrorism" was resolved earlier this year by the Canadian Federal Court. On September 27, Mr. Justice Richard Mosley ruled unequivocally that it cannot: to consider humanitarian aid as "terrorism" would be to void the term of all meaning.

More importantly, our campaign follows the imperatives of international law, which our politicians have conveniently forgotten. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has issued a very clear statement on the subject: "The hardship faced by Gaza's 1.5 million people cannot be addressed by providing humanitarian aid. The only sustainable solution is to lift the closure."

We have no illusions about the amounts of aid we can bring to Gaza, nor the amount of trade goods our modest vessel will be able to export, yet this aid will still have a significant impact on the suffering of the Palestinians of Gaza.

The significance of the international Freedom Flotilla movement is not in the amounts or types of goods we manage to bring in or out of Gaza, it is in challenging the blockade itself. Because it collectively punishes a civilian population, the blockade is clearly illegal under international law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Because the blockade is illegal, opposing it is a moral duty for people of conscience everywhere. Our campaign involves over 100 grassroots groups from across Canada and thousands of large and small individual donations, responding to the cry for help from the Palestinians of Gaza to take decisive action, where government and state agents have failed them.

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(From page 3) **Canadian Boat to Gaza**

We join with like-minded flotilla delegations from many different countries focused on the same goal: ending the illegal and cruel blockade of Gaza.

Representatives of the Canadian Boat to Gaza recently met in Rome with a dozen other such projects. In Gaza, we work with nongovernmental partners through a network of Palestinian NGOs.

We neither seek nor require support from any state agency or government—be it Stephen Harper's Conservatives or Hamas.

The ICRC goes on to clarify that "all states have an obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments" to Gaza. This means all consignments, not just those that arrive via land routes approved by Israel.

There is no justification in international law for stopping ships bearing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

In our national political context, where groups like the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism seek to criminalize support for Palestinian human rights, we refuse to be intimidated by the twin hysterical allegations of "terrorism" and "anti-Semitism". Canadian and international law are clear: these smears are both equally baseless, and support for the Palestinians of Gaza is an ethical imperative.

People of conscience are voting with their donations to support the Canadian boat to join the Freedom Flotilla in the spring of 2011. Our holiday fund appeal has received a generous response, perhaps in part spurred on by the spurious attacks we have faced.

With international law and, more than ever, world public opinion on our side, we will not let slander or bullying steer us off course. The words of the captain of the Mavi Marmara to the rest of the Freedom Flotilla when they were violently boarded last May still ring in our ears: Carry on!

*David Heap is a London, Ontario based activist. Derrick O'Keefe is a writer and activist in Vancouver and the co chair of the StopWar.ca Coalition. Both are members of the national steering committee for the Canadian Boat to Gaza.*

*Ed note: Derrick O'keefe is also co-chair of the Canadian Peace Alliance.*



The Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) welcomes articles, which are the sole responsibility of the authors and may not be common consensus. To contribute please contact **Laura** at **250-442-0434** or **l4peace@telus.net**. The BPI is a member of: Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Canadian Peace Alliance, Abolition 2000, Lawyers Against the War, Uranium Free Kootenay Boundary, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation as well as other local and global groups.

**As Israel Acquits Itself of Flotilla Massacre, Canadian Boat to Gaza Prepares to Sail**

**MONTREAL, QUEBEC--(Marketwire - Jan. 24, 2011)**

As they move closer to their goal of sending a ship to break the siege, Canadian Boat to Gaza (CBG) campaigners find the Israeli report on the murders of international activists aboard the Mavi Marmara on May 31, 2010 completely unconvincing and unworthy of the widespread coverage it has received. "This is like criminals investigating their own crime and the world treating their investigation as if it were credible," said Ehab Lotayef, spokesperson for the Canadian Boat to Gaza.

"I find it disturbing how much attention is given to this Israeli investigation in Canada, compared to the previous investigations on the subject by the U.N. Human Rights Council, Turkey and International Bureau of Humanitarian NGOs (IBH) & Friends of Charities Association (FOCA), all of which placed blame on Israel," said Sandra Ruch of the CBG Steering Committee.

"If any of the Mavi's passengers were even inclined to violence, how come there were no firearms with them and how come the guns they captured from the Israeli invaders were never used, even when the Israelis started killing unarmed civilians?" commented Kevin Neish, a Canadian activist who was on board the Mavi Marmara last May.

Even before this report was issued, Canadian Foreign Affairs spokesperson Pierre Florea said that the Canadian government stands by Israel and strongly advised Canadians against attempting to break the naval blockade of Gaza.

"The Canadian Government continues its shameful, unconditional backing of Israel, rather than defending justice and human rights for all, which makes civil society groups like us more determined than ever to continue our work," said Lotayef. "We, the Canadian people, have to act where our government is failing to do so, on the international stage."

The Canadian Boat to Gaza has now raised more than half of its \$300,000 goal, and has the endorsement of over a hundred Canadian organizations, including faith groups, trade unions and NGOs. Hundreds of Canadians have endorsed and financially contributed to the project as well. It is scheduled to sail to Gaza within the second Freedom Flotilla this spring, along with boats from up to a dozen countries, equally determined to break the illegal siege.

"It's outrageous that Ottawa would side with a foreign power against a humanitarian aid mission aimed at breaking a siege that is illegal under international law -- we'll sail as part of the next Freedom Flotilla, whether Harper's minority government likes it or not," said David Heap, a London peace activist.

**For more information, please contact**

Ehab Lotayef - 514-941-9792

Sandra Ruch - 416-716-4010

[www.canadaboatgaza.org](http://www.canadaboatgaza.org)

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