Friday, August 5th, 2016

To the attention of

*The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada*
*The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Global Affairs Canada*
*The Honourable John McCallum, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*

Mr. Prime Minister of Canada,
Mr. Ministers,

In less than a week, the first ever World Social Forum (WSF) to take place in the global north will begin in Montreal, Quebec. Unless quick action is taken, a significant number of delegates from countries in the Global South will not attend due to unjustified delays and mass denials in visa processing at Canadian Embassies in several countries.

According to the preliminary data that we consolidated to this day, out of the 14% of the people that received an invitation, more than 70% of applications were denied. Among the countries most affected, we can find the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Iran, Haiti, Nigeria and Nepal, but this worrying situation was also found in Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ghana, Mali, Palestine, Togo, and more.

The preparation of the WSF has included a political and collective process, as well as the purchase of travel tickets and a lot of important costs that the organisations and social movements have shouldered in order to participate at the WSF. But activists from Latin America, Africa and Asia, have been refused visas based on unacceptable, exclusionary and discriminatory argumentation and within the framework of an outsourced visa application process that privatizes the rights of the people to freedom of movement and assembly.

As members of a large number of international, regional and national movements, networks and organisations, some of which have been part of the WSF process since its inception in 2001, we:

- **Request an urgent meeting with the competent authorities of the ministry of Global Affairs Canada and of the ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, before the World Social Forum starts.**

- **Call on the ministry of Global Affairs Canada to fulfil Canada's international obligations to the right to freedom of associations** as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was ratified by Canada. The World Social Forum (WSF) and the World Forum on Free Media (WFFM) are two of the most internationally recognized fora upholding this right.

- **Call on the ministry of Global Affairs Canada and of the ministry of Immigration,**
Refugees and Citizenship Canada to approve, without further delay, all pending visa applications for the World Social Forum (WSF) and the World Forum on Free Media (WFFM), and to initiate immediate inquiries into all rejected applications, by measures such as a ministerial directive.

- Call on the ministry of Global Affairs Canada and of the ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to arrange visas-on-arrival to all delegates who have been refused. Especially those refused on the grounds of “Purpose for the trip”.

Sincerely yours,

Contact:
Pierre-Yves Serinet, RQIC, Québec, rqic@ciso.qc.ca, 1-438-396-6284
Mónica Vargas, Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity, campaign@stopcorporateimpunity.org
Richard Girard, Polaris Institute, Canada, richard@polarisinstitute.org, 1-613-327-0053

SIGNATORIES:

Réseau québécois sur l’intégration continentale (RQIC), Canada
Les membres du RQIC:
- Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS), Canada
- Alternatives, Canada
- Association canadienne des avocats du mouvement syndical (ACAMS), Canada
- ATTAC-Québec, Canada
- Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI), Canada
- Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD), Canada
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Canada
- Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ), Canada
- Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain-CSN (CCMM-CSN), Canada
- Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ), Canada
- Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), Canada
- Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ), Canada
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), Canada
- Génération nationale, Canada
- Mouvement d’éducation populaire autonome et d’action communautaire du Québec (MÉPACQ), Canada
- Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes (RQGE), Canada
- Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnelles du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ), Canada

AITEC, France
Antennes de Paix Montréal, Canada
ATTAC – Argentina, Argentina
Attac – Austria
Attac - Norway
Attac France, France
Attac Togo, Togo
Attac/CADTM Maroc, Maroc
CADTM (Comité para la Abolicion de las deuda ilegitimas), International network
CEDETIM – IPAM, France
Centre Europe-Tiers Monde (CETIM), Switzerland
Centre international de solidarité ouvrière, Canada
Centre justice et foi/revue Relations, Canada
Collectif Forum Social Mondial 2016, Canada
Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine, Canada
Common Frontiers, Canada
Conseil des Canadiens, Canada
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
FASE - Solidariedade e Educação, Brazil
Fédération Artisans du Monde, France
Fédération SUD PTT, France
Femmes autochtones du Quebec, Canada
Food & Water Watch, USA
Frantz Fanon Foundation, International network
Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity, International network
Global Justice Now (Attac UK), United Kingdom
Groupe de recherche sur les espaces publics et les innovations politiques - GREPIP, UQAM, Canada
Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN-HIC), International network
IBASE, Brazil
Land Defense Coalition (Member organizations: Stop the Wall Campaign, Palestinian Farmers Union, Palestinian New Federation of Trade Unions, The Popular Council to Protect the Jordan Valley, Palestine Youth Forum, Association for Farmers’ Rights and for the Preservation of the Environment, Women Center for Social Development, Association Jadayel/Palestinian Center for Culture, Arts and Creativity, Palestinian Farms Society-Tulkarem, N’lin Society for Development Community Work, Al-Amal Association for Childhood and Development), Palestine
L’Entraide missionnaire, Canada
Marcha Mundial das Mulheres / World March of Women, International network
May First/People Link, USA
Mexicanxs Unidxs Por la regularizacion (MUR), Canada
MiningWatch Canada, Canada
Norwegian Social Forum, Norway
Observatorio de multinacionales en América Latina - Paz con Dignidad (Estado español), Spain
Oekumenisches Buero fuer Frieden und Gerechtigkeit e.V., Germany
OQSIDH, Canada
Palestinian Farmers Union, Palestine
Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, Palestine
Palestinian New Federation of Trade Unions, Palestine
Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala, Canada
Réseau Solidarité Développement International, France
Secours Catholique - Caritas France, France
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Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique, Canada
TNI - Transnational Institute, the Netherlands
Trade Justice Network, Canada
Union Juive Française pour la Paix, France
Union syndicale Solidaires, France
USA Canada Alliance of Inhabitants, USA
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Network, Nepal
Védegylet Association, Hungary
Vigilance OGM, Canada
War on Want, United Kingdom