



GLOBAL JUSTICE

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CUPE PSE Task Force stands in solidarity with Mexican students



PHOTO: BRETT GUNDLAND

MEXICO CITY PROTESTER HOLDS A ROLLED POSTER WITH THE SLOGAN "THEY WERE TAKEN ALIVE, WE WANT THEM BACK ALIVE."

When CUPE's National Post-Secondary Education Task Force (PSE) met in Ottawa late last year, committee co-chair, Leo Cheverie, made sure to add recent events in Mexico to the agenda.

"As labour activists fighting for a better education system here in Canada, I think it's

important to show solidarity with all those struggling for equality and justice abroad," said Cheverie.

Last September, about one hundred students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teacher's College in Ayotzinapa had traveled 250 km to Iguala, in order to protest the Mexican

government's discrimination in education funding and to promote equal access for rural and urban schools.

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CUPE
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FREE ALL POLITICAL
PRISONERS IN THE
PHILIPPINES!

Free COURAGE 2

RANDY B. VEGAS AND RAUL T. CAMPOSANO

LIBÉREZ TOUS LES PRISONNIERS
POLITIQUES AUX PHILIPPINES!

Libérez COURAGE 2

RANDY B. VEGAS ET RAUL T. CAMPOSANO

It takes courage to speak truth to power

COURAGE is an apt acronym for the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE) the largest labour confederation in the Philippines.

Randy Vegas and Raul Camposano are two organizers in the Philippines with COURAGE. They were abducted and have been detained since December 2012, for asserting their human rights and fighting for workers' rights.

"It is hard to believe that President Aquino III has turned a deaf ear to the unjust imprisonment of Randy and Raul. At his inaugural address he promised "complete justice for all." Yet his government has failed miserably in its human rights obligations," said Global

Justice committee member Betty Valenzuela.

COURAGE with over 200,000 members is pushing hard against government corruption and is leading campaigns against the privatization of public services.

"Where many governments have failed, unions have succeeded. CUPE has been steadfast in our solidarity work with COURAGE, and in our struggle to free Vegas and Camposano. Solidarity has no borders," said Valenzuela. ●

Global Justice is published 3 times a year to provide workers and their representatives an overview of international solidarity work taken on by the Global Justice fund and within CUPE as a whole.

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CUPE Canadian Union
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CUPE demands justice for Deepan



DEEPAN BUDLAKOTI FACES DEPORTATION TO INDIA, WHERE HE HAS NEVER LIVED.

Deepan Budlakoti is an Ottawa born man who is facing deportation to India, a country where he has never lived, has no family and where he is not a citizen.

“We are shocked that the Government of Canada has rendered this young man stateless and has stripped him of his right to work, access services and live with dignity and security,” said CUPE National President Paul Moist.

Budlakoti’s citizenship was revoked after he got in trouble with the law as a young person. By revoking his citizenship the Canadian government unjustly punished him twice for crimes for which he has already completed a sentence.

Canada ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness which obliges governments to act in a manner that avoids, rather than increases statelessness. Amnesty International has raised clear concern that “Canada’s position of refusing to recognize Mr. Budlakoti’s Canadian citizenship runs counter to the country’s international human rights obligations with respect to

statelessness and leads to other related human rights violations.”

Two-tier citizenship rights in this country could lead to increased criminalization of racialized communities, and could undermine our ability to organize for causes and take political action without fear of being stripped of our rights. “CUPE is deeply concerned that the Canadian government believes that Canadian citizenship is something other than a right for those who possess it, and that it can be selectively used as a tool to punish and intimidate certain members of our society,” said Moist. ●

VISIT JUSTICEFORDEEPAN.ORG

When a temporary foreign workers program is not temporary

Canada currently accepts more migrants under the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) than it does permanent residents. Barriers to permanent residency for refugees, skilled workers and family members are increasing, while citizenship for migrants is becoming harder to get and easier to lose.

The Philippines is the major source of temporary cheap labour for Canada along with the United States, United Kingdom, China, India and

Mexico. Filipino workers, just like other migrant workers, are recruited from the Global South. Their temporary status makes them vulnerable to employer abuse and excessive exploitation. Poverty, unemployment, the absence of genuine industrialization and agrarian reform and the Philippine government’s Labour Export Policy, continue to push workers out of the country by the thousands everyday to work abroad.

“Migrants are human beings first before they are workers.

They are not mere statistics to buttress a country’s gross domestic product. Let us not forget that migrant rights are human rights,” said Dr. Chandu Claver in his presentation to the members of the CUPE-BC International Solidarity Committee in October 2014. Claver is an active member of MIGRANTE BC, a provincial chapter of MIGRANTE Canada that focuses on advocacy for Filipino migrants in British Columbia.

MIGRANTE BC aims to organize, protect and promote the rights and welfare of Filipino immigrant and migrant workers in BC. The invaluable support and community collaboration between CUPE and MIGRANTE BC will contribute to advancing the organizing work, education and political campaigns that promote and protect migrants’ rights and welfare. ●

Beth Dollaga is a member of CUPE 15 and of the CUPE BC International Solidarity Committee.

CUPE PSE solidarity with Mexican students

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During the protest, 43 students were kidnapped. Disturbing details have emerged linking the disappearances and subsequent murders to local authorities. These events have shed light on repeated human rights violations carried out by police and state security

forces, including arbitrary detention, criminalization of protest, torture and enforced disappearances.

As Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto's administration repeatedly fails to fulfil its human rights obligations and has allowed for crimes to continue with impunity, Canada's response has been lacking. "The Harper government must finally break its silence on the issue, and

increase the pressure on the Mexican government to bring those responsible to justice," said Cheverie. In the committee's view, Canada must urge the Mexican president to introduce major structural changes which will bring human rights to the centre of his administration's political agenda.

To mark International Human Rights day, December 10, 2014, the PSE Task Force expressed solidarity with

protesters from across Mexico who have stood up for justice, equality and peace. The Task Force condemned the use of arrests and brutality as tools to stifle the right of people in Mexico to protest peacefully. "Knowing that some are risking their very lives in the name of accessibility and academic freedom helps motivate us to keep fighting for better education here at home," said Cheverie. ●

1. #Black lives matter The world watched as protests erupted across the United States at the end of 2014. Demonstrators across the country chanted "No justice, no peace!" and "Death to racism" after the shocking announcement that the white police officer who killed unarmed 18 year old African American youth, Michael Brown, would not be charged with a crime.

In New York City, thousands later marched to draw attention to racial profiling, police brutality and what one man described as the "systematic murder of people of colour in this country and its institutionalized racism." #BlackLivesMatter emerged as the rallying call and the opportunity for people of diverse origin around the world to express solidarity with the black community in the US, who experience higher rates of police shootings, incarceration, unemployment and poverty.

2. What the TISA is this? A new report by Public Services International (PSI) warns that governments are planning to take the world on a liberalisation spree on a scale never seen before. According to the report, this massive trade deal will put public health care, broadcasting, water, transport and other services at risk. The proposed deal could make it impossible for future governments to restore public services to public control, even in cases where private service delivery has failed. It would also restrict a government's ability to regulate key sectors including financial, energy, telecommunications and cross-border data flows. The Trades in Services Agreement (TISA), currently being negotiated in secret and outside of World Trade Organization rules, is a deliberate attempt to privilege the profits of the richest corporations and countries in the world over those who have the greatest needs.

Negotiations began in 2013 and continue today working towards a very ambitious agreement on far-reaching services liberalization and disciplining of government activity. The "Really Good Friends of Services" currently include Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, the United States, and the 28 member states of the European Union.

3. Global justice in film CUPE Global Justice and the Island Peace Committee held a Social Justice Film Festival in February at the University of Prince Edward Island. CUPE Global Justice activists hosted the film *The Take*, a documentary about a group of 30 unemployed Argentinean auto workers who attempt to kick-start their dead careers. Following in the footsteps of others throughout the country, they set up shop in the desolate auto factory where they used to work, announcing their intentions to re-start the plant as a cooperative business, without the aid of bosses. The festival was well attended.



NEWS IN BRIEF