



## Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity

125 Brandon Avenue, Toronto, ON M6H 2E2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 JUNE 2010

### **TORONTO ASSOCIATION FOR PEACE CONDEMNS G20 POLICE VIOLENCE Group Demands That Charges Against Protestors Be Dropped, Calls for Open Public Inquiry**

[TORONTO] The Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity (TAPS) condemns the brutal and provocative actions by the Integrated Security Unit police during the anti-G20 protests in Toronto. The group is demanding that all people detained in connection with the protests be unconditionally released, that their charges be immediately dropped, and that there be a full, open public inquiry into the police violence.

Following a week of lively, creative and democratic protest – involving a broad range of organizations and individuals – that culminated in a peaceful demonstration by over 25,000 people on June 26, the police response was clearly designed to provoke violence. The spectacle of hundreds of fully armed riot police lining city streets to confront a peaceful, family-friendly rally and march would be laughable if the outcome were not so tragic. The march had not yet concluded and was nowhere near the “security zone” when police attacked protestors, many of whom were beaten and even tear gassed.

During this violent dispersal of a peaceful demonstration, and in the days that followed, police arrested nearly 1000 people, some from as far away as Vancouver, in a sweep reminiscent of the invocation of the War Measures Act in October 1970. In an effort to generate sympathy for the arrests and the police attack that preceded them, the public have been pummeled with images of burning police vehicles and protestors smashing windows. However, it is already abundantly clear that police had infiltrated some of the groups involved in the protest, well ahead of the demonstration: this is obvious from video footage that the police have introduced during bail hearings, which indicate that police were taping protests while posing as protestors.

The issue of police activity within social movements raises the question of police acting as *agent provocateurs*, and it wholly compromises whatever charges have been made against people arrested in connection with the protests. In light of the facts about police provocation, it is clear that all detained persons must be immediately and unconditionally released, and all charges against them dropped.

Furthermore, it is clear that the police actions were premeditated and had been given a political “green light” by both the federal and provincial governments. Stephen Harper's decision to spend over \$1 billion on heightened security, and Dalton McGuinty's secret passage of extraordinary, martial law-style police powers are an outrage. The politicians involved in these decisions must be held accountable, along with the police, for the violence that has occurred.

It is distressing that Toronto Mayor David Miller has dismissed calls for an inquiry into the police actions, and has instead called for civilian oversight of the Integrated Security Unit. The fact is, the ISU is a discredited organization that was formed for a provocative purpose, operates under secretive conditions, and should be dismantled. As for civilian oversight of police services, this is obviously a crucial element of democracy, but it is only effective to the extent that it is practiced. For David Miller to dismiss a public inquiry into police violence is to make a sham of the civilian oversight that he claims to promote. It is the responsibility of municipal governments to protect their population – it is imperative that the Toronto Mayor and Toronto City Council join thousands of individuals and organizations in demanding a full, open public inquiry into police actions.

The main purpose of the police provocation at the demonstration, as well as the carefully orchestrated media frenzy about violent protestors that preceded it, is to divert public debate from the real issues represented by the G20. Genocide against indigenous populations, poverty and mass unemployment, degradation of the environment, attacks on labour rights, racism, oppression of women – these and many other issues are the key themes that brought tens of thousands of people into the streets of Toronto to protest the G20. Until there is a people's solution to these problems, and to the policies of imperialism – war, exploitation, plunder – that generate them, mobilizations will continue. The Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity supports efforts to build a mass movement against the policies of the G20 – a movement for peace, equality, liberation and solidarity.

**We demand:**

- **The immediate and unconditional release of all people arrested or detained in connection with the G20 protests;**
- **The immediate dropping of all charges against those arrested;**
- **A full, open and public inquiry into police actions leading up to and during the G20 protests, including the role of the federal and provincial governments.**

- 30 -

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*About the Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity:*

The Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity is an organization of people working for world peace and disarmament. We maintain that peace, not militarism and war, is the guarantor of democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice. TAPS is the local member of the Canadian Peace Congress, founded in 1949 and affiliated to the World Peace Council and the Canadian Peace Alliance.

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