



Canadian Friends Service Committee

E-Newsletter

August 2015

UNHRC reports on Canada

On July 23 the UN Human Rights Committee issued a report with many scathing observations on the state of human rights in Canada. The periodic review was the first on Canada in ten years and focused on many of CFSC's priority concerns, including:

- human rights abuses by Canadian companies operating abroad (especially mining companies);
- persistent gender inequality and violence against women and girls;
- human rights concerns raised by the "Anti-Terrorism Act" Bill C-51;
- overcrowding and the use of segregation (solitary confinement) in prisons; and
- many concerns related to Indigenous rights, discussed in our joint statement: <http://quakerservice.ca/UNHRCReport> (you can find a link to the full UNHRC report at the top of the page)



Rachel Singleton-Polster (CFSC) and Will David (Assembly of First Nations) expressing their support for human rights at the UN in Geneva

Radical Nonviolence: A Camp for Peacemakers



We'll be gathering to build community, learn from each other about nonviolence, and enjoy the great outdoors including ample free time for canoeing and games from August 24th to 30th.

This is the first time CFSC is offering this week together and we hope you'll be there. It's not too late to register or to contact us for travel funds to help you get to camp. The camp is open to all, Quaker or not, 16 to 116 (apologies to 117 year olds).

Find out more at: <http://www.quakerservice.ca/camp>

CFSC participates in international discussions on synthetic biology

Using engineering principles and computer science, synthetic biology (SB)'s aims include the creation of entirely new "designer life forms". CFSC has just finished nine weeks' participation in an online forum on SB organized under the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity.

The discussion included benefits and risks of SB. Industry and some countries like Canada supported no further regulation, little or no investigation into the unknowns related to SB or its "indirect" social and ecological impacts, and expressed concerns not to "stifle innovation".

CFSC raised multiple issues communicated to us by 10 Monthly Meetings that discussed SB in 2013. We noted the poor job humans are currently doing as stewards of biodiversity, the critical importance of a precautionary approach, the need to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples in particular, and the need to recognize our delicate place within creation rather than outside of it. For more background about SB see: <http://www.quakerservice.ca/SyntheticBiology>

Friends support HIV+ patient care in Burundi

For the past year CFSC has financially supported Friends Women's Association (FWA) in Bujumbura, Burundi. FWA has provided information and access to services to improve family planning and sexual and reproductive health. Building on the successes of this relationship, CFSC and Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting will be supporting FWA in providing care to HIV+ Burundians for the next three years. Read a report about FWA's work written by one of their volunteers: <http://bit.ly/FWAReport>

Update on C-51 – “Anti – Terrorism Act”

Readers of the E-News are aware of CFSC's concerns with Bill C-51 (<http://www.quakerservice.ca/c51>). While it has passed despite widespread opposition, civil society organizations have launched legal challenges to this legislation <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/c-51-sees-charter-challenge-from-civil-liberties-press-freedom-advocates-1.3161435>

CFSC continues to monitor and engage with the civil liberties concerns of Friends as minuted originally at Canadian Yearly Meeting in 2003. Find out more at: <http://quakerservice.ca/CivilLiberties>

Friends who are so led may also wish to sign a petition calling for the repeal of C-51 (we hope you can forgive the violent name of this campaign!) <https://killc51.ca>

25th Anniversary of Oka crisis

This summer marks the 25th anniversary of the "Oka crisis" in Kanehsatà:ke, Quebec. The dispute, as readers may know, took place between the Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) People and the town of Oka over plans to expand a golf course into sacred Kanien'kéha territory, including a burial ground. To mark the anniversary, Ellen Gabriel of Kanehsatà:ke invited organizations, including CFSC, to meet and discuss the ongoing impacts of the crisis and its implications on national and international Indigenous rights.

To view a webinar of the event, visit: <http://quakerservice.ca/our-work/indigenous-peoples-rights>



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5R 1C7
Tel: 416-920-5213 Email: info@quakerservice.ca Website: www.quakerservice.ca
<http://www.quakerservice.ca/facebook> | <http://www.quakerservice.ca/twitter>

Stand up for justice and peace: <http://www.quakerservice.ca/support>

Practical assistance, policy dialogue, research, and education - CFSC works for a world where peace and justice prevail.
Read past issues & encourage others to subscribe at <http://www.quakerservice.ca/enews>
