



# Canadian Friends Service Committee **E-Newsletter**

December, 2017

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## **Annual Accountability Report 2016-2017**

This is a lovely time of year because we receive so many letters, cards, and donations - each an expression of support and solidarity with our shared vision of a world where peace and justice prevail. CFSC is small and could not continue to function without the support of the donors making gifts right now. To everyone who's already done so - thank you! If you have not donated yet, please give today and get your 2017 tax receipt.

Read our Annual Report at <http://report.quakerservice.ca> and find out how your donation is helping us to bring peaceful and healing approaches to conflict right here, right now. Please stand up for peace and justice and make a donation to CFSC.

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## **What does replacement for Bill C-51 mean for Canadian rights?**

Canadians were rightly deeply disturbed by Bill C-51, the Anti-Terrorism Act 2015 (to find out why read our analysis <http://quakerservice.ca/C51>). We turned out by the thousands to protest across the country. The Liberal government came to power promising changes.

After consultations a new bill was introduced, Bill C-59. It's a long and complex bill with nine different sections. It has some good elements, and many very troubling ones. The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (CFSC is a member) has been working to analyze and explain what exactly this legislation means. They're also calling for major changes to it.

Learn more about Bill C-59 at <http://iclmg.ca/issues/bill-c-59-the-national-security-act-of-2017/>  
You may also feel led to call for changes to the Bill: <http://iclmg.ca/act-on-c59/>

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## **CFSC supports participation in restorative justice symposium**

The National Restorative Justice Symposium was held in Ottawa in November. We supported two Friends to participate. Kirsten Van Drunen, Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting, is a criminal defence lawyer interested in conflict resolution, who has recently completed training in mediation and nonviolent communication. She is particularly interested in helping the Canadian justice system develop toward greater use of alternative dispute resolution and Indigenous law.

Michael Pedruski, Montréal Meeting, volunteers with Communitas, a non-profit that focuses on restorative justice and reintegration after release from prison. Michael plans to use the resources acquired at the National Restorative Justice Symposium to help further this work. He also wants to foster greater dialogue about restorative justice at the Montréal Meeting.

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## **Who's voice gets heard about gene drives?**

In theory a synthetic biology gene drive could irreversibly alter a whole species. It could force nearly every member, in the wild, to inherit genetically engineered traits. The key international body discussing the implications of this developing technology is the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We've joined online forums and an expert group within the CBD to raise the need for precaution and regulation.

Access to information requests recently demonstrated that many scientists and some governments (including Canada), participate in these discussions in coordinated ways, with support from well-financed PR firms. There's clearly a strong attempt to push powerful new technologies like gene drives ahead as quickly as possible.

We would welcome scientists and governments to be transparent about their positions on these important issues, and about the sources of these positions. Are they based in careful review of the evidence and recognition of what is known as well as what is unknown, uncertain, and ambiguous? Are they based on personal conviction? Are they talking points generated by public relations experts? Are they coloured by personal ability to financially benefit from the use of a technology? Muddying these very different sources of information makes it difficult to know who's voice we're really hearing in these debates, undermining our confidence in the integrity and value of the process.

Learn more about gene drives and other applications of synthetic biology at:

<http://quakerservice.ca/syntheticbiology>

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## **Open letter calls for action on human rights**

For the first time since 1988 the federal, provincial and territorial governments have met to discuss Canada's approaches to human rights and CFSC joined in calling for action on recommendations from the United Nations. In August, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) set out more than 60 detailed, concrete recommendations for governments in Canada.

The UN Committee's recommendations addressed some of the most pressing human rights concerns in Canada including respect for the land rights of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples' right of free, prior and informed consent; violence against Indigenous women and girls; over-incarceration of Indigenous persons, people of African descent and members of other racialized groups; discrimination against African Canadians in education and employment; racial profiling of African Canadians by police services and correctional officers; and unequal access to government services including the need to comply with four legal orders to cease discrimination in the provision of First Nations children's services.

Read the open letter: <http://quakerservice.ca/news/open-letter-participants-federal-provincial-territorial-ministerial-meeting-human-rights/>

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