

A Call to drop all charges of those arrested during the COP15

Sunday, 14 March 2010

Defend those who defended your interests! (to find out how, see the green-coloured part of this email)

This Tuesday 16th and Friday 19th they will appear before the Danish courts.

Dear friends,

As you know, many politicians and corporations attended the COP15 summit in Copenhagen in December 2009 and so did thousands of activists who were prepared to represent the interests of the majority of the world's population.

The Danish police, under orders to "keep the streets clean" for the media spectacle of the climate summit, engaged in a campaign of intense repression against those who would make their voices heard in the streets, and take action for the climate. Exploiting existing legislation as well as the new L mmelpakken, a package of repressive public order laws passed just before the summit, the Danish police preemptively arrested around two thousand people, tapped phones, spied on and raided private residences and sleeping places, and generally acted in a manner designed to stifle free speech.

During the demos in the streets, many people suffered the brutality of the Danish police, with their truncheons, gases and dogs. Watch the following one-minute video to see how peaceful people who were defending all of our interests were treated. The images are even more shocking when you think that these people in particular were UN-accredited representatives of nations and groups, who were inside the UN in the last days (when civil society was mostly kept outside), and who had negotiated with the police so they would be allowed to reach the street, to join thousands of activists (who were also beaten and gassed) who were celebrating a People's Assembly on that December 16th, to denounce the lack of transparency and the hijacking of the negotiations by corporate interests. The police lied and beat UN delegates:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6QaqpRUCVg&NR=1>

Of the thousands arrested, only around 30 (less than 2 percent) were actually charged with a crime. Some of these people were kept in jail for over a month while awaiting trial or while "under investigation". Most of those held for such long periods of time were there on account of straightforward charges such as throwing a rock or resisting arrest, and have already gone to court, resulting in a number of not guilty verdicts or short jail sentences. However, 7 people (so far) are facing more serious charges. They are being accused of a variety of crimes, but all share the charge of planning to disrupt public order and planning to commit violence against the police.

The charges carry potential prison terms of several years and deportation.

The charges against these 7 people amount to identifying and criminalizing them as "organizers" of the protests, which were primarily actions of civil disobedience and permitted demonstrations. Regardless of who may have organized the demonstrations, it ought not to be illegal to organize to demonstrate and exercise people's right to free speech. These charges are being used to punish people who would dare to speak truth to power, and to scare other people away from organizing demonstrations in the future. The people charged with organizing are: Stine Gry, Natasha Vecro, Tannie Nyboe, Noah Weiss, Malthe Ege, Mads Kissow, and Tadzio Muller. Some are Danish citizens and residents of Denmark, others foreign nationals. Some were arrested biking down the street, others in their families' homes. Some had their homes raided and searched. Others had their phones tapped and movements monitored by a state that is more and

more looking like a police state. Some are facing deportation, all are facing long jail sentences under the new rules of LÅ,mmelpakken. But most importantly: all face charges of which they are innocent.

It is interesting to note that there were many other spokespeople who were not arrested, who represent large civil movements. Amongst them were Henri Saragih, general secretary of La VÃ-a Campesina, an organization with 200 million members worldwide. Also present was Judy Nacpil from Jubilee South, Wahu Kara of the Peopleâ€™s Movement on Climate Change and Kenya Debt Relief Network, Jihan Gearon from the Indigenous Environmental Network, and others... Why were they not arrested? Perhaps after managing to ignore the voices of the indigenous and peasant peoples in the negotiations, it would have been too much to arrest their leaders in the streets. Not a good PR move.

However, the scope groups represented shows the importance of the issues that the demos were about: these are the interests of more than 2 billion peasants in the world, of all indigenous peoples, of the oppressed and the impoverished, and of all those who care about the future of our children. The non-violent actions that were carried out were totally legitimate, faced with the threat to survival of billions of people, represented by the people who marched in Copenhagen.

This is why, when the court cases begin, it will be the world who will be on trial by the Danish authorities. We need to show them that the world is watching.

To show your support, please send your own letter (or use the sample one attached) via email, fax or post, to one or more of the following institutions, or call them by phone to express your opinion:

Å Å Å * To the Danish Embassy. Find the one in your country here:
http://www.embassyworld.com/Embassy_Search_Engine/

Å Å Å * To the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Asiatisk Plads 2

DK 1448 Copenhagen K

TelÃ©fono: +45 33 92 00 00

Fax: +45 32 54 05 33

e-mail: um@um.dk

Å Å Å * to the Danish Parliament:

Folketinget, Christiansborg 1240 KÃ¸benhavn K

Telefon: +45 3337 5500

E-mail: folketinget@ft.dk

In the attached letter, we demand that the Danish government immediately drop all charges against those accused of organizing demonstrations, because they are being used to quieten voices of dissent and to scare people from using their freedom of speech and the right to organize. As a person who feels represented by the activists who were brave enough to stand up and be heard, with this letter you are adding your voice to the demand of freedom for these people.

Thanks for your participation. Pass it on to your contacts! Between us we can change things.

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March 2010

To whom it may concern,

As a concerned citizen, I am writing to express my concern at the decision of the Danish government to bring charges against individuals arrested during the peaceful protests in Copenhagen during the COP 15 last December.

The international movement for Climate Justice which organized the mobilizations in Copenhagen is composed of many hundreds and thousands of groups and individuals worldwide who represent the interests of the majority of the people of this world. As a person who feels represented by them, I strongly condemn the repression of the Danish state which aims to stifle dissent, a right which is the basis of any functioning democracy.

I add my voice to those who demand that the charges against Natasha Verco and Noah Weiss and the other climate prisoners, like Stine Gry, Tannie Nyboe, Malthe Ege, Mads Kissow and Tadzio Muller, are immediately dropped. Freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate

are basic human rights, and the citizens of the world are astonished by the fact that charges are brought against people for the organization of legal protests in Denmark.

The actions of the Danish state not only threaten Danish democracy, but threaten to set a worrying precedent globally that dissenting voices must not be heard – repressing and criminalizing those who struggle for social justice, real democracy and human rights worldwide.

I urge the Danish government to take all these voices into consideration and to make sure that the climate prisoners are immediately released – the world is watching.

The current climate crisis is a global emergency. In Copenhagen thousands of people protested against the UNFCCC that was imposing false business solutions instead of solving the problem.

Today the struggle for climate justice is a duty, not a crime.

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