

On the Justice of Tearing Down Fences and Dismantling Borders

A Joint Statement of No One Is Illegal Toronto, No One Is Illegal Vancouver, No One Is Illegal Halifax, No One Is Illegal Montreal and No One Is Illegal Ottawa - April 28, 2011



No One Is Illegal groups continue to struggle on the streets for migrant justice across North America against increasingly repressive and racist immigration controls. We join together once again this year with workers around the world during May Day demonstrations to assert our dignity and affirm international solidarity with those who dare to challenge borders and capitalism. We also take our struggle to the courts where a member of No One Is Illegal, Jaggi Singh, is pleading guilty to counseling to commit mischief and is facing six months in prison (INFO: www.clac-montreal.net/jaggi), for rightfully asserting that the G20 security fence was illegitimate and courageously calling for it to be torn down!

Close to one year ago, No One is Illegal joined with thousands on the streets of Toronto and dared to dream of a world without borders and fences. We marched with Indigenous people, migrants, poor people, people of colour, queer and trans people, feminists, disabled people, anarchists, anti-poverty activists, rank and file labour activists, anti-capitalists, environmental justice activists, and community organizers to confront the G20 leaders in Toronto.

We dared to challenge the illegitimate fence that separated the rich and powerful elite conspiring to an agreement of global austerity at the G20 from the people on the streets who inevitably are meant to bear the brunt of these policies. We reclaimed power, we shook the fence, and we broke through the police lines. We then went back to our communities and continued building our movements for social, economic, and environmental justice and autonomy.

Today, we unite again in solidarity with our friends and allies who challenged the validity of the G20 security fence and are facing state repression. Those facing charges, including members of No One Is Illegal Toronto and Montreal, have been targeted and persecuted because of their work struggling for self-determination in our communities. The state's attempt to criminalize these individuals is a targeted attempt to silence our movements. But we have not allowed the courts, the police, or the media to divide our solidarity. We demand the immediate release and dropping of charges of all those still facing criminal charges.

The Crown and the courts are alleging it is a crime to challenge and call for the dismantling of the fence. We collectively stand by the public statements made by various members of No One Is Illegal and our allies at the People's Summit, the press conference at the fence, and our joint release. We asserted then, and we assert now, that the militarized fence - another physical and ideological symbol of global apartheid, corporate greed, and a way to keep the elite separate from the people - should have come down.

We recall that the same things were said of the acts of those who built the Underground Railroad, of those who dared to challenge slavery. We recall that the same things were said of those who tore down the walls of the Woomera detention camp, who dared to challenge racist and xenophobic borders. We recall that the same things were said of those who tore down the fences of Bantustans, who dared to resist Apartheid in South Africa. We reassert that the G20 fence among all other barriers that prevent ordinary people from making meaningful decisions about their lives must be torn down!

And we will tear the fences down. While the security state may have weapons of destruction, we too have weapons: weapons of hope, weapons of unity, weapons of solidarity - and they will overcome these fences!

The type of repression that has followed the G20 is symptomatic of the broader policies of exploitation that are the daily reality for Indigenous, poor and racialized communities. The G8 and G20 leaders and their corporate masters erect borders, manufacture weaponry, pillage the earth with industrial projects, and profit from war. The repression of migrants in Canada has steadily increased - we have seen unprecedented powers transferred to the Immigration Minister and enforcement officers to determine who can come into Canada and who is left out; we have seen major cuts to family reunification programs, to work visas, to avenues for permanent residency. New regulations mean that temporary migrant workers are permanently temporary, exploited and indentured, while thousands of refugees and asylum seekers remain behind bars in detention centres.

Daily, we stand in solidarity with those who are deemed "illegal" by the colonial state and are forced to live under the threat of detention and deportation. And daily, we organize against the racism and xenophobia that defines the history of colonization and displacement in Canada. We are growing and building as movements, and on May 1st thousands will take to the streets to assert that our dreams don't fit in ballot boxes. That tangible political changes will only happen through the grassroots mobilization of our communities. We call on everyone residing on these occupied Indigenous lands to join us on the streets, in community centres, in schools, in work places, in parks and all other places where we are building resistance everyday. No One is Illegal unites with all of those around the world who are resisting austerity measures - from Greece to Egypt, from Chiapas to Six Nations, from Haiti to Palestine.

We understand that revolution at its root is driven by people's dreams and desires.
No Fences, No Borders! No One Is Illegal, Canada Is Illegal!

www.nooneisillegal.org

* June 19 Videos, courtesy NOII-Toronto, of No One Is Illegal and allies at the People's Summit "'Colonialism, Capitalism, and Migration":
<http://noii-van.resist.ca/?p=2870>

* June 22 Statement "No One Is Illegal at the G8/G20 Mobilizations in Toronto":
<http://toronto.mediacoop.ca/newsrelease/3703>

* June 24th Video of No One Is Illegal and Indigenous Defenders of the Land at "No Fences, No Borders" press conference at the G20 fence in Toronto: <http://bchannelnews.tv/?p=5690>

* July 3rd Statement "No One Is Illegal Solidarity with the anti-G20 Resistance":
<http://noii-van.resist.ca/?p=2108>

****NOTE: No one criminally charged with being involved in anti-G20 related actions was involved in drafting or writing this statement.**