

BRING LUCY BACK !

A Violent Arrest

At 6am the morning of March 20th, four CBSA agents forced their way into the home of Lucy Francineth Granados, a neighbour and community member who had lived in Montreal for 9 years. They proceeded to violently arrest her, throwing Lucy onto a table and then the ground, twisting her arm while an agent held her down with a knee pressed into her back. They then brought her to the Laval Immigration Detention Centre, where she was detained pending deportation. Her treatment provoked a health crisis: she was twice hospitalized, the first time after suffering a cardiac arrest. Four medical specialists recommended she not be deported in this state. On Friday, April 13th, Lucy was nevertheless deported to Guatemala, accompanied by two CBSA agents and a nurse, with only the clothes on her back. Her arm was still partially immobilized and her hand swollen; her neck and her back were bruised and she had a persistent chest pain.

Who is Lucy and Why was she treated this way?

Lucy Francineth Granados was one of hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants living in Canada. Like many others, Lucy left her home country of Guatemala because the situation for her and her family was increasingly difficult. Criminal gangs in her area, known as the maras, were a constant threat. Four members of Lucy's family were killed by these gangs. After her husband died in an accident, Lucy struggled to support her three children alone. When members of the maras began extorting money from Lucy, she sought safety and a way to support her children. She boarded a freight train known as La Bestia or death train (because of the large number of migrants who die on it every year), to cross Mexico and arrive in the United States, finally reaching Canada in 2009.

But Canada's refugee system failed Lucy. Her application for asylum was refused and she was ordered deported. Lucy made the courageous decision to defy the deportation order, and in 2012 joined the ranks of Canada's undocumented - those who live and work in the shadows, surviving precariously, always at risk of arrest and deportation and excluded from even basic rights and services.

Lucy joined the Montreal Non Status Women's Collective and the ATTAP (Association of Temporary Workers) to work for the rights of migrants. In 2017, Lucy filed an application for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, the only way undocumented residents can regularize their status. In January 2018, a CBSA officer called Lucy's lawyer and threatened that her application for permanent residence would not be processed if she did not turn herself in to be deported. This false and illegal threat on the part of the CBSA threw Lucy into a state of extreme anxiety. Two months later, the CBSA succeeded in tracking Lucy down, arresting her at her home.

Widespread Support for our Friend and Neighbor Lucy

For four weeks after her arrest, friends and supporters of Lucy worked tirelessly to prevent the CBSA from tearing our community apart through this deportation. A multitude of actions were organized: visits to MP offices, mass phone calls and emails to Ministers Hussen and Goodale's offices, open letters and articles; rallies, banner drops, vigils and an eight-day sit-in; a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC); a petition with more than 14,000 signatures.

Despite widespread protests in many cities, Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen and Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale refused to intervene. In a last effort to prevent her deportation, dozens of community members went to the Laval Immigration Holding Center at 3:00am on April 13th and formed a festive blockade. But CBSA was so determined to proceed with Lucy's deportation and silence a campaign that has shed light on CBSA abuse that officers cut a hole in the fence behind the detention centre to sneak Lucy out. They put her on a plane to Guatemala and she was deported with only the clothes on her back.



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Solidarity and Respect for all Undocumented Migrants

All these efforts were not only a show of love for Lucy, but of solidarity and respect for all undocumented community members. Each action was an assertion of community solidarity and the right of every human to live in dignity against the violent exclusions of Canada's immigration system. The campaign succeeded in many ways, even as it revealed the cruelty of the Canadian government, which poured resources into deporting this undocumented single mother in the face of overwhelming community support for her.

Lucy's experience sends a chilling message to other undocumented community members looking to regularize their status or speak out for their rights. We are outraged by the routine violence with which this migrant woman was treated and by the casual indifference at every level of government. We refuse all rationalizations for detaining and deporting Lucy. We demand Lucy be returned to our community immediately. We demand respect for her and all other undocumented migrants.

ACTIONS

We must now continue the struggle. It is essential that the government be held accountable - not only for Lucy and her family, but also for the hundreds of thousands of other undocumented immigrants in Canada. Here are some things you can do:

+ Call and write Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen

-> Ask him to accept Lucy's Humanitarian and Compassionate file immediately.

Lucy's application for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds (H&C) is still being processed; if it is accepted she may be able to return to Canada. Lucy's file is very strong and, under normal circumstances, if she were still in the country, it would have been accepted. However, it is very unusual for H&Cs to be accepted once the applicant is deported. So public support is needed.

Phone: 613-995-0777 + 416-656-2526

Email: Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca + minister@cic.gc.ca

+ Call and write Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale

Ask for an investigation into CBSA conduct towards Lucy and for charges to be laid against the agents involved. Why was the government so determined to deport Lucy? This question should be asked as loudly and as often as possible.

Phone: 613-947-1153 + 306-585-2202 + 613-991-2924

Email: ralph.goodale@parl.gc.ca + Hon.ralph.goodale@canada.ca

End detention. Stop deportations. Status for all. Bring Lucy Back.

For more information on Lucy and the campaign visit:
www.solidarityacrossborders.org/
www.facebook.com/CiteSansFrontieres

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