

To: Believers in social justice everywhere, including the Canadian people, and especially the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Chris Alexander, the Canadian Minister of Public Safety, responsible for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Steven Blaney, and the Quebec Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities, Diane De Courcy:

Canada is recognised throughout the world as a welcoming society with humanitarian values. Successive generations of newcomers from all corners of the globe have continued to reinforce these values as they escaped harsher and oppressive social and economic conditions.

Canada continues to rank among the world's most generous and fair countries in our treatment of vulnerable populations. The United Nations has described Canada's system as, quote, "a model for other countries".

This is why the current situation with Montreal resident Ivonne Hernandez conflicts with the basic human values and compassion that are prized by all Canadians and is offensive to all decent human beings. She has committed no crime, is not a terrorist and does not merit in any way deportation.

On January 28 the Canadian Border Services Agency decided that Ivonne Hernandez would be deported on February 7th and refused to allow her to stay until March 6th, the date of a hearing to review the decision to grant custody of her child to his father. Should Ivonne be deported, she would be separated from her son, perhaps for life.

We urge you to reconsider the current treatment proposed for Ivonne Hernandez and that she be allowed to stay in Canada until March 6th and beyond. Most Canadians agree that Ivonne should never have been detained. Ivonne is deserving of permanent status in Canada. Ivonne should have protection from conjugal violence. And, most importantly, Ivonne, a loving and caring mother, should not be separated from her son.

We urge the Canadian government to demonstrate the justice, equality and compassion on which Canadian society is founded. Please demonstrate to the world that Canada is indeed a caring society lead by a humanitarian government. Ivonne Hernandez should remain in Canada with her son and be protected from abuse.

We pray hard for compassion and understanding and may justice prevail in your decision to permit Ivonne Hernandez to remain in Canada with her son.

St. Saviours Anglican Church in Orono, Ontario.