



••solidarity across borders

Solidarity Across Borders is a migrant justice network based in Montreal, active since 2003. We are comprised of migrants and allies, and we organize together to support individuals and families who are confronting an unjust immigration and refugee system. We mobilize around our main demands, which include: an end to deportations and detentions and opposition to the double punishment of migrants with criminal records. We demand Status for All! and are in the beginning stages of building our “Solidarity City” campaign.

We mobilize by popular education, support work, as well as political mobilizations, including demonstrations, pickets, and direct actions.

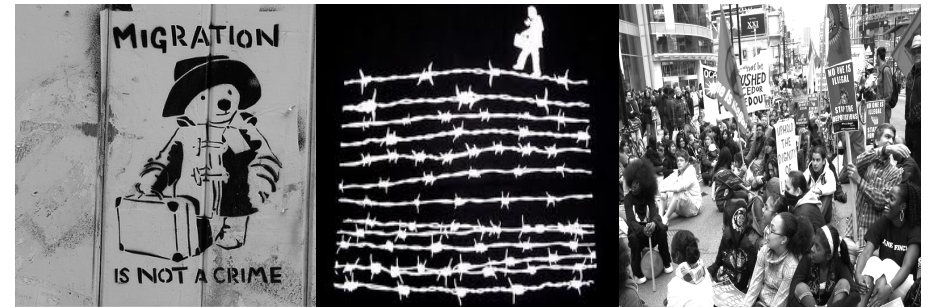
We encourage you to check our website or get in touch by phone or e-mail for more information. All of us can be part of building a Solidarity City in Montreal.

solidarity across borders

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status



for

all!



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••status for all!

“Status for All” means that we demand a full, comprehensive and ongoing regularization program for all people living in Montreal, Quebec and Canada who do not have full status (ie. permanent residence or citizenship). “Regularization” programs have been called “amnesties” in other countries, but we prefer not to use that term, since migrants don’t need to be excused or pardoned for exercising completely legitimate and understandable choices to migrate to another part of the world, whether for economic or political reasons.

Undocumented migrants and temporary workers are the most exploited in the workplace and in society. Their existence creates an fundamentally unjust reality within our communities, whereby some people are able to access basic rights and services – like education, health care and workers’ protections - and others cannot. An individual who is non-status, or who does not have full status as a resident, can be more easily exploited because they live in fear of being removed. They often live their lives within our communities in fear and isolation.

In the past, providing rights and services to some people, while systematically denying those rights and services to others, was justified by appeals to racism, or false ideas of cultural superiority or exclusiveness. But, in the 21st century, providing rights and services to some but not others is a hallmark of apartheid. Individuals and families migrate for completely understandable and legitimate reasons. By demanding Status for All we reject global apartheid and internal apartheid, and instead stand in solidarity with all migrants.



A Solidarity City is the creation of a community that rejects a system that engenders poverty and anguish, not solely for immigrants and refugees, but also for other Montrealers confronting these same realities.

We are opposing fear, isolation, precarity and division. We strike back with solidarity, mutual aid, support work and direct action.

The “Solidarity City” campaign is an attempt to generalize and broaden some key organizing principles that have been applied in migrant justice work in Montreal:

- breaking isolation and fear; attempting to network and unify around common, direct and straightforward demands (ie. status for all, as well as opposition to deportations and detentions);
- practicing tangible mutual aid and solidarity (support work) in contrast to charity or “service” approaches;
- organizing campaigns arising from on-the-ground realities;
- building the capacity of our mutual aid and support networks over the long-term;
- holding decision-makers directly accountable for their actions and policies;
- using direct action to achieve justice.

Join us!

These undocumented people are our neighbors, our colleagues, our classmates and our friends. They are people whose only “crime” was to migrate in the search for a better life for themselves and their family.



Too often non-status migrants do not have access to essential services such as health care, education or social services. Or, they might never dare entering a hospital, clinic or food bank for fear that their status be revealed to the authorities.

We demand that:

- everyone living here should have access to free health care in clinics, CLSCs and hospitals. Medical facilities should never ask for information on immigration status. Instead, they should work to provide appropriate and respectful care to all users. We want health care to be accessible to all and support efforts to defend the public health care system.
- everyone living here should be able to attend school free of charge, regardless of their - or their parents - immigration status. We are in favor of universal education for all, from kindergarten to university, and defend accessible education at all levels and for all people.
- the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) should not have any right to enter and arrest migrants in hospitals, clinics, shelters, schools, or any space providing essential services; ultimately, the CBSA should not be welcome anywhere in our communities.
- any person living here should have access to social housing, food banks, unemployment benefits and any other social welfare regardless of immigration status.

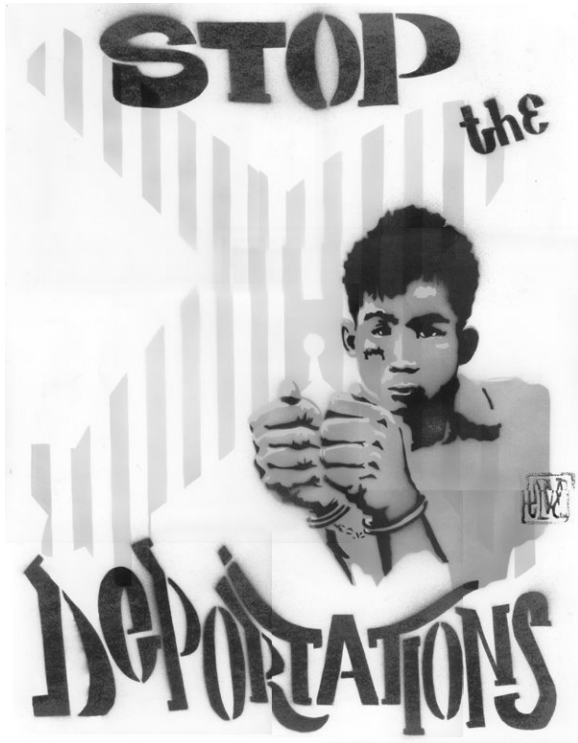
By demanding Status for All we want to break the fear and isolation associated with the reality of being a non-status person. A Status for All demand rejects the divide-and-rule tactics used by the state to classify migrants as “deserving” versus “undeserving”, or “good” versus “bad” immigrants. We aim to create genuine solidarity and support between all migrants, whether they are new immigrants, undocumented workers, refugees, or temporary workers.

Simply put, Status for All means that all residents of Canada will get the documentation they need (to be permanent residents and citizens) so they can access all services and have recourse to all the same rights as anyone else. Essentially, Status for All means we struggle and organize so that all residents, regardless of their origins, can have full dignity as human beings.

STATUS FOR ALL!



••no to deportations!

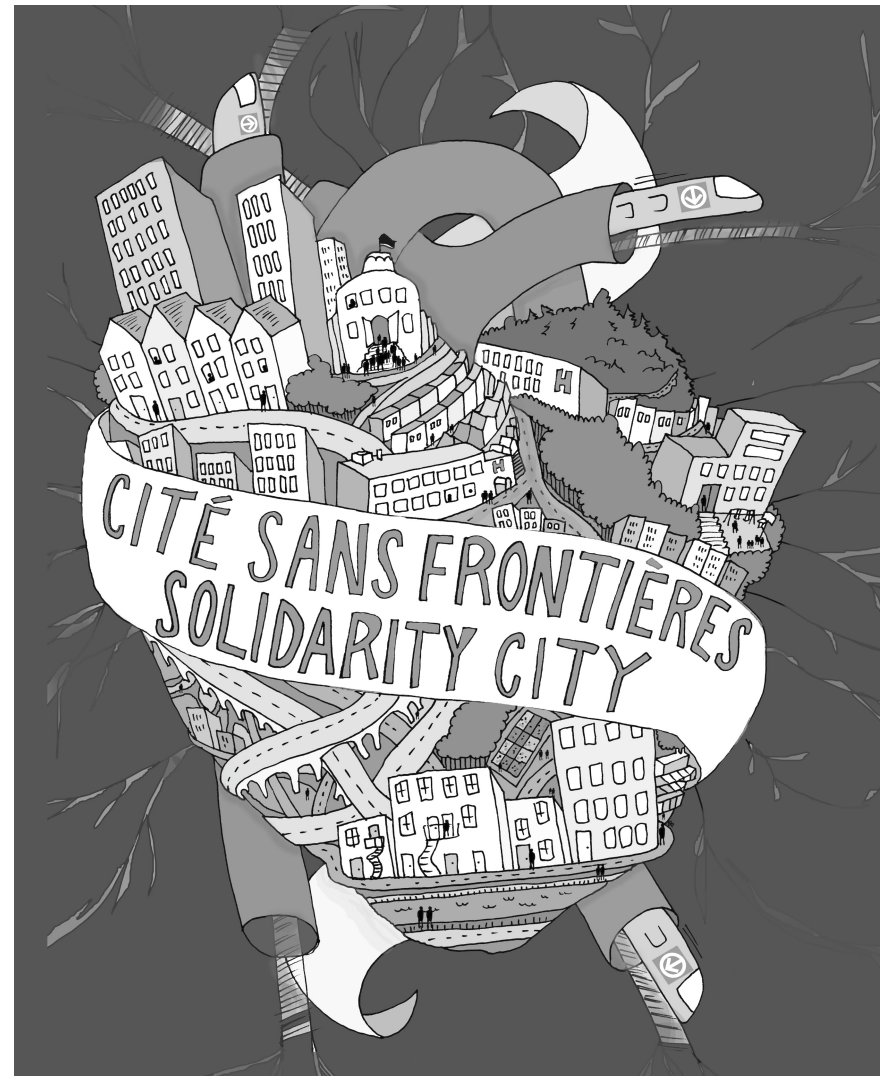


Deportations from Canada have increased more than fifty percent over the last decade; in 2009 alone more than 13,000 people were removed. And as the numbers continue to rise, US-style raids and detentions are becoming common practice for the CBSA (Canadian Border Services Agency).

The bureaucratic avenues to challenge deportation orders are full of structural problems. Over 97% of Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) decisions, the next-to-last step before a deportation, are rejected. And, individuals and families can be removed while awaiting Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds application (a procedure which is expensive to undertake in the first place).

••solidarity city

For thousands of undocumented immigrants across the country cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver are sweatshops. Immigrants and refugees work the most precarious and dangerous jobs. The Canadian economy cannot survive without this work force that is exploited due to the lack of permanent status and the threat of forced removal.



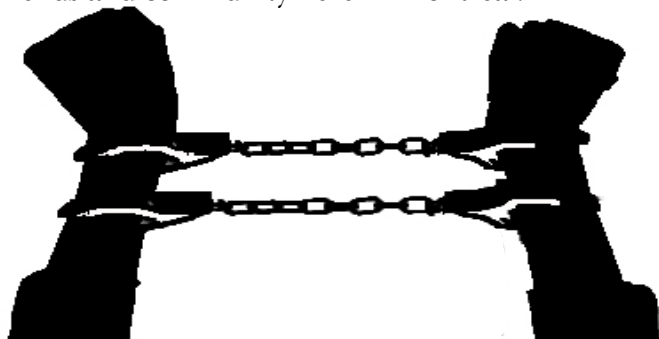
••no to double punishment!

“Double punishment” is the term used to describe the unjust policy used against non-citizens who face deportation after being punished for a criminal conviction. In other words, non-citizens who commit criminal offenses are punished twice: once when they’re sentenced for their crime, and then again by being permanently removed from Canada, often after living here since childhood.

Double punishment is often the direct result of racial profiling: A recent leaked study of Montreal police reports proves that racial profiling is endemic in Montreal. Neighbourhoods such as Montreal-Nord, St- Michel, Parc-Extension, and Côte-des-Neiges are over-policed and criminalized due to the density of immigrant and racialized communities living there. The targeting of these communities not only forces a disproportionate number of poor and people of colour into the criminal justice system, but also into immigration proceedings if they do not have full Canadian citizenship.

We reject the link between criminality and immigration. This link is racist and false. It’s the way for jingoistic politicians to win cheap votes.

The reality of double punishment in our communities often provokes feelings of shame and isolation, due to the stigma of a criminal conviction. We aim to break this isolation by taking a clear stance against double punishment, and building together to expose this injustice, and to support the individuals fighting to remain with their families, friends and community here in Montreal.



Deportations separate people from the families, friends and lives that they have established in Canada. While capital, corporations and privileged “first world” nationals travel freely wherever they want, migrants from the majority world are illegalized, criminalized and prevented from exercising their fundamental rights. They simply cease to be people; they become 'illegal immigrants', 'non-status', 'undocumented' and 'failed asylum seekers'. When their exploited labor is no longer needed or when they stand up for their rights, they become disposable. Common struggles and entire communities are divided and rendered invisible, giving way to a culture of suspicion, surveillance and repression.

We stand in solidarity with those who struggle to resist their deportations and forced removals. We believe that everyone has the right to migrate, the right to resist forced displacement, and the right return to their homelands if they so choose.



••no to detentions!

More and more migrants who are fleeing their homes to escape persecution, war and misery, or for economic opportunity, find themselves behind bars. The Canadian state reserves itself the right to detain without charge any migrant in the immigration and refugee process, including children, for indefinite periods of time. On any given day in Canada, there are upwards of 500 people in immigration detention centres. Detention is an integral part of Canada's immigration regime which criminalizes people for who they are as migrants, and not for anything they have done. The act of being a migrant essentially becomes criminalized through detention.

The supposed reasons for detention are arbitrary. It is up to the discretion of the border guards and immigration bureaucrats to throw people into detention for not having valid identity documents, by claiming suspicion that they will not show up to their next immigration hearing, or by deeming newcomers a flight risk.



Detainees are often excluded from bail and have no idea when and if they will be released. Immigrants in detention centers have minimal access to legal and translation services which prejudices their ability to make claims and applications in a timely fashion.

The Canadian state is not stopping there: it wants more and more migrants to be put in detentions centers. The current Harper government is proposing a new piece of legislation, Bill C-49, that would further criminalize migrants and refugees for traveling by irregular means, and enforce mandatory detention until their eventual removal. This bill further reinforces a "Fortress Canada" and will compel migrants and refugees to take even more dangerous, costly, and precarious routes to get to Canada.

The Immigration Prevention Center in Laval is the nearest immigrant detention center to Montreal, where upwards of 100 individuals and families are detained at any given point in time. Migrants are also often detained in maximum security prisons, such as Rivières-des-Prairies (RDP). We demand the immediate release of all detainees in immigration detention facilities, and organize for the closing of all detention centres.

