



The BC Civil Liberties Association and la Ligue des droits et libertés Call for Inquiry into Police Activities at the Montebello Summit

VANCOUVER, September 7, 2007: The BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) and la Ligue des droits et libertés (la Ligue) are calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to establish a public inquiry to investigate the conduct of police and security forces assembled for the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) summit at Montebello, Québec August 20-21, 2007.

Grace Pastine, Litigation Director of the BCCLA: ``It is imperative that police respect Canada's constitutional values and work to protect, not undermine, public freedoms and safety. Police conduct at Montebello demonstrated no such commitment.``

The BCCLA and la Ligue assert that actions taken by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) disrupted the peaceful protests and restricted demonstrators' ability to express their political views. The BCCLA and la Ligue have information that in the weeks leading up to the SPP summit, police and security forces followed citizens who were intending to attend the protests and questioned them about their participation. Near the demonstrations held in Ottawa, on August 19, police forces systematically took pictures of protestors as they exited their buses and in certain cases tried to verify their identities.

On August 20, the RCMP fired plastic bullets even though there was nothing to indicate that they, or other citizens, were in danger. The RCMP and/or the SQ also unjustifiably used chemical and/or irritant weapons on peaceful protesters. The SQ has admitted that it planted three undercover officers amongst peaceful protesters; the officers were dressed in black clothing wearing masks covering their faces, and at least one of the officers carried a large rock.

For a full copy of the letter sent to the Honourable Stephen Harper, please see the BCCLA's website: www.bccla.org/pressreleases/07Harper.pdf

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