



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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For immediate release

BCCLA wants Vancouver 2010 police out of City Hall

Vancouver – The B.C. Civil Liberties Association has released an open letter to the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (ISU) asking them to stay out of City Hall for intelligence gathering purposes.

A report obtained by the BCCLA indicates that three plain-clothes members of the RCMP coordinated ISU attended City Hall on January 22, 2009 to gather information about individuals attending a City Council meeting to speak against municipal Olympic initiatives. The report, released by the Vancouver Police Department, indicates that two Olympic-related agenda items were “items of interest” to the ISU, as were the names of three anti-Olympic activists on the speakers’ list.

“Having this activity occur in the context of a meeting of publicly elected officials where members of the public are entitled to attend, hear what is said and, at the appropriate juncture, speak out about matters that concern them, is troubling,” writes BCCLA President Robert Holmes in his letter to the ISU. “We would not want, and we assume that the ISU would not want, there to be any suggestion of intimidation by the presence of such officers at that kind of meeting.”

Following the public Council meeting, the three ISU officers stopped individuals who had spoken against the Olympics during the meeting ostensibly to invite them to a “consultation” process. The BCCLA has asked the ISU to stop monitoring City Hall proceedings and to approach activists for the purposes of consultation through less potentially intimidating methods.

“We call on the ISU immediately to cease its practice of monitoring the public democratic process that takes place at City Hall,” says the letter from BCCLA President Robert Holmes. “We also urge the ISU to establish contact with organizations through their established channels, rather than through spontaneous contact in venues traditionally viewed as protected from police monitoring.”

No response from the ISU has yet been received by the BCCLA. The BCCLA’s letter, which includes the full VPD report, is available on their website at www.bccla.org.

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