



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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For immediate release

Legal observer teams trained to hit the streets in 2010

Vancouver, B.C. – If the BCCLA and Pivot get their way, more than 100 pairs of eyeballs will be on the streets of Vancouver during the 2010 Olympics watching for rights violations by the more than 7,000 police officers, 5,000 private security guards and 4,500 members of the Canadian armed forces.

The organizations announced a collaboration on a legal observer training program for the 2010 Olympics that launches this Sunday with a training at the Britannia community centre at 2:30 p.m. Members of the public are welcome to attend the training and volunteer to become legal observers. They can register by e-mailing info@bccla.org.

“Our observers will be there to record any rights violations, and while we hope that they’re bored during the Games, we suspect they’ll be busy,” said BCCLA President Robert Holmes, who listed protester rights to free speech, the rights of spectators to wear the clothing they choose inside venues, and the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure as key concerns.

The BCCLA also released a number of documents obtained through freedom of information request that outline what they say is an International Olympic Committee agenda to interfere with Canadian rights to free speech.

“Individually, the documents are offensive but could be seen as an overzealous mistake,” said Holmes. “When assembled, however, they paint a dire picture of an international organization that feels Canadian rights and freedoms are secondary to their motive of profit from the Olympic franchise.” Workshops to train observers will be held September 20, October 11, November 22 and December 6, all at 2:30 p.m. and all at the Britannia Community Centre on Commercial Drive.

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Backgrounder – Anti-Free Speech Primary Documents

As part of their press conference, the BCCLA released a number of documents that they say outlines the anti-free speech agenda of the Swiss-based International Olympic Committee and the Integrated Security Unit.

The Olympic Torch Run Manual that calls on cities to limit the distribution of political leaflets during the torch run: [Read >>](#)

The Clean Venue Agreement that outlines a VANOC swat team that will seize offensive literature on public property, how the IOC required VANOC to prevent anyone other than Olympic sponsors from advertising during the Games, and how private security guards will prevent people from holding signs or wearing clothes with political messages in Olympic venues: [Read >>](#)

The Olympic Host City Agreement in which the IOC required the City of Vancouver to prevent international media and attendees at Olympic venues from seeing political speech inside and outside the venues, which was signed by then Mayor of Vancouver Larry Campbell: [Read >>](#)

The Olympic Charter in which the IOC dictates at Rule 51 that “No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas. [Read part 1 >>](#) [Read part 2 >>](#)

The Manual for Candidate Cities which demands compliance with the terms of the Olympic Charter for all candidate host cities, including Vancouver, during and after the bid process. [Read >>](#)

The Olympic Technical Manual on Media, in which the IOC attempts to limit coverage of the Games to coverage that “by its content, spreads and promotes the principles of Olympism,” and which grants the IOC the ability to withdraw accreditation from any journalist at any time for any reason. [Read >>](#)

Letters in which the Olympic Integrated Security Unit and Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) refuse to refrain from using Agents Provocateur or to assume the leadership of activist organizations, following a request from the B.C. Civil Liberties Association to forswear the tactics. Such tactics may be permissible under certain interpretations of Canadian criminal and constitutional law, but their legality is disputed by the BCCLA. [Letter to CSIS >>](#) [CSIS response >>](#) [Letter to ISU >>](#) [ISU response >>](#)

Backgrounder – Legal Observer materials

Training sessions for legal observers take place on Sundays, starting September 20, at 2:30 at the Britannia Community Centre. Observers will be trained in a two hour session, and will be scheduled for shifts in pairs during the Olympic period.

Workshops to train observers will be held September 20, October 11, November 22 and December 6, all at 2:30 p.m. and all at the Britannia Community Centre on Commercial Drive. Additional workshops in the new year will be advertised on the BCCLA and Pivot Legal Society websites. The Legal Observer Training Manual is available online [here >>](#)