



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
February 13, 2010

ATTENTION EDITORS: The previously announced Sunday, February 14 press conference at the BCCLA has been cancelled. The next briefing is scheduled for Monday, February 15, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. at 1188 West Georgia Street.

BCCLA pleased with policing at Opening Ceremonies demonstration, Observers record few issues

Vancouver, B.C. – A full contingent of Legal Observer teams monitored the policing of the demonstrations at the Olympics Opening Ceremonies. The large demonstrations that started at the Vancouver Art Gallery were notably peaceful. Restrained policing and protest marked the procession of the march to BC Place Stadium. Very few incidents involving police were observed, with the exception of a police barricade push-back that was unannounced and the fact that the majority of RCMP officers attending were not wearing legible badge numbers or names for accountability purposes.

"We were very pleased with the effective and restrained policing of the demonstrations that we observed prior to and during the Opening Ceremonies," said BCCLA Policy Director Micheal Vonn. "We know that the Legal Observers contributed significantly to the success of these demonstrations. We were thanked by many people attending and were told by some that our presence gave them the confidence that the events would be safe and their rights respected."

The Legal Observers were asked by event organizers not to attend the "Heart Attack" demonstration on Saturday, February 13. Several arrests were reported by media to have taken place at this event. Event organizers did call on the Legal Observers during the event. Although our Observers attended as quickly as possible, the crowd was largely dispersed by the time we arrived. Aside from witnessing and documenting police in full riot gear and with an array of armaments, we have no reports from this event and little footage to share.

Our Observers will be participating in the Murdered and Missing Women Memorial March tomorrow (Sunday) and preparing for the homeless tent city protest (Monday) as well as sharing video highlights from the Opening Ceremonies demonstration and several smaller events, on Monday, February 15, 2010. All 8 a.m. press conferences are held at 1188 West Georgia.

As always, BCCLA staff and board members are available for comment on civil liberties issues, including as they relate to the Olympics.

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