

Joint-statement

Signed by 13 organizations and groups in Quebec

others will sign on as the campaign grows till March 2006.

This is the statement (open letter) from the Quebec City peace network (*commission Paix*) written for Sept. 24, 2005 in solidarity with the protests across the USA and the world. www.coalitionsquebec.org

Commercial medias did not publish it, but it was posted in French and English to various grassroots medias.



n.b.: We also suggest you read or endorse the declaration produced by the Quebec-wide collective (*collectif Échec à la guerre*) demanding that Canada cease all military complicity with the Bush administration. www.echecalaguerre.org

This 24th of September 2005, there are good reasons to denounce the occupation of Iraq.

Between 1990 and 2003, United Nations' humanitarian agencies confirmed that the Iraqi people endured massive deaths and acute suffering under economic sanctions. This murderous policy, actively enforced by the former Canadian government, had dramatically weakened the Iraqi population while strengthening Saddam Hussein.

Today, after two and a half years, the occupation of Iraq by the United States of America (US) has brought neither peace nor security, or even the reconstruction of basic infrastructures necessary to sustain life. In fact, the death rates and humanitarian suffering are worse today under the occupation led by President George W. Bush. According to the UNICEF (Nov. 23, 2004), "Latest reports are showing that acute malnutrition among young children has nearly doubled since March 2003" [read: since the invasion] (1). The main cause of malnutrition and death remains lack of clean water.

As to violence, we would very much prefer a massive non violent resistance in Iraq. We must state that appalling attacks against innocent people are not acts of resistance. Yet, people who decide to attack the military occupation forces are not terrorists and international law recognizes that people can legally combat an occupation or armed repression. After all, if US soldiers occupied Quebec, there would certainly be acts of violent resistance, even though massive non violent resistance would be preferable and more efficient.

But there is another form of indecency and inhumanity, that of the huge profit made by businesses and civil servants associated with the US government. There are still approximately 10 000 people detained for weeks or months without being charged. Since the invasion, there are unending cases of Iraqi families murdered in their cars simply because they come too close to a blockade held by US soldiers, not to mention others "preventively" killed. What we are seeing here is not a UN multinational force, but a continued occupation with unequalled violence and actions that are incompatible with International Humanitarian Law.

The presence of US military forces and the death and humiliation of tens of thousands of innocent people all increase violence and do not help in any way. This is why a good part of the new Iraqi parliament demands the withdrawal of US troops and why the current President, for his part, is asking for at least a partial withdrawal : he proposes that 50 000 soldiers return of the US soon. Shouldn't we respect the will of this Iraqi elected parliament ?

It is extremely disappointing that some governments made sure the UN would not define terrorism, but we shall put forth our own :
an act of terrorism is to cause suffering or death to innocent people or civilians with the intention of imposing one's will, be it economic, political, religious or other.

Considering its great share of abuses, its criminal irresponsibility, its acts of war and the hatred it breeds, the occupation of Iraq is a more than total failure and we must recognize that peace will eventually be possible only after the occupation forces have been withdrawn. The people of Quebec and Canada should make sure the federal government and businesses do not in any way help foreign troops in Iraq.

**We remain determined to denounce the criminal invasion and occupation of a country which had not made any threats,
in solidarity with the horrible suffering endured by the Iraqi people —and therefore also appalled by attacks that kill innocent people—
and devoted to peace and intercultural communication.**

The Peace Commission of the "Quebec Region Social Forum Network"
commission Paix du Réseau du Forum social de Québec Chaudière-Appalaches
www.coalitionsquebec.org

- Alternatives
- *Asso. québécoise des AmiEs de Cuba*
- ATTAC - Quebec Chapter (int'l movement for democratic control of financial markets...)
- *Carrefour de pastorale en monde ouvrier* (CAPMO www.capmo.org)
- *Carrefour Tiers-Monde* (www.carrefour-tiers-monde.org)
- *Centre de ressources des femmes de Beauport*
- *Conféd. des associations d'étudiant-es de l'Univ. Laval* (CADEUL www.cadeul.ulaval.ca)
- Laval University Delegation of the Rights & Democracy Network
- *Ligue des droits et libertés*, Quebec Chapter (LDL www.liguedesdroitsqc.org)
- Michaël Lessard, NDP candidate for Quebec City
- Movement of Christian Workers (MTC), Quebec City Chapter.
- *Regroupement d'éducation populaire en action communautaire...* (RÉPAC 03-12)
- *Solidarité populaire Estrie*

(1) UNICEF, Official statement : *Bellamy speaks out for children in Iraq*, Nov. 23, 2004.
[On line, consulted Sept. 20, 2005: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_24233.html]

The Peace Commission is an antiwar network for the Quebec Region : we are individuals and organizations who stand in solidarity with people submitted to oppression or military occupation. Our network includes coalitions in support of the people of Latin America, Iraq, Palestine and a committee against Bush's 'antimissile system'.