

# WAR RESISTERS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

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MEDIA RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

Sunday, March 15, 2009

## **MPs Call Out Prime Minister for Failing to Listen to Canadians by Deporting Iraq War Resisters**

### **Harper Must Stop the Deportation of Kimberly Rivera and Her Family**

**SAN DIEGO**—On Sunday afternoon, Members of Parliament Olivia Chow (Trinity–Spadina) and Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre), visited Robin Long in the Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar in San Diego, California. They travelled to California on a fact-finding trip to learn about Long's condition after his deportation from Canada.

The visit took place four days before the sixth anniversary of the most recent U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

"Robin is sitting in jail today as a conscientious objector because the Harper government has failed Canadians," said Olivia Chow, NDP Citizenship and Immigration Critic.

"The majority of Canadians want Iraq War resisters to be accepted as permanent residents of Canada, yet our government continues to deport them," said Chow, "War resisters are targeted for prosecution and imprisoned because they've come to the same conclusion as Prime Minister Harper—that the Iraq War is 'absolutely an error'."

"The House of Commons voted last June to immediately stop the deportations of Iraq War resisters and allow them to live in Canada," said Borys Wrzesnewskij, Liberal MP. "Prime Minister Harper's refusal to act on the direction of Parliament and failure to stop the deportation of war resisters is not only anti-democratic, it fundamentally undermines the will of Parliament and the institution of the House of Commons."

"Kimberly Rivera, a young mother of three small children, should be applauded for speaking the truth about what she bore witness to in Iraq and refusing to redeploy," said Wrzesnewskij. Immigration Minister Jason Kenney is putting her in jeopardy of being incarcerated for her principled and difficult stand."

Robin Long was deported from British Columbia in July, 2008, the month after the Canadian Parliament directed the Government of Canada to stop all such deportations and facilitate permanent residence status for American Iraq War resisters in Canada. On February 12, 2009, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration re-affirmed <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=3681601&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=2> that position.

Upon deportation, Long was court-martialed, sentenced to 15 months in prison and given a felony conviction that will cause him hardship for the rest of his life. Long has been separated from his Canadian son and is currently imprisoned as a conscientious objector.

Three Iraq War resisters and their children currently face imminent threat of deportation, including veteran Kimberly Rivera who has been ordered to leave by Thursday, March 26. Jeremy Hinzman is awaiting a decision in his appeal to the Federal Court and could be deported anytime, and former Army Sergeant Patrick Hart is expecting a removal date in the coming weeks.

A public opinion poll conducted by Angus Reid Strategies last June found that 64 per cent of Canadians want the government to allow Iraq War resisters to become permanent residents of Canada.

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**AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:** MPs Olivia Chow and Borys Wrzesnewskij are available for interviews by telephone today. They will also be available for a photo opportunity in San Diego on Monday, March 16 at 9:00 a.m. PT (12:00 noon ET). To arrange an interview please call Alex Lisman, 416-580-8393; or Olivia Chow, 613-302-5341; or Borys Wrzesnewskij, 416-274-1190.

For further information, please contact: Ken Marciniec, Communications Volunteer, War Resisters Support Campaign, 416-803-6066; or Michelle Robidoux, Organiser, War Resisters Support Campaign, 416-856-5008.