



## **ICLMG deeply concerned by the refusal by the Canadian officials to issue visas for some of the World Social Forum participants**

Ottawa, August 9<sup>th</sup> 2016,

The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group is deeply concerned about the recent news that Canadian immigration officials are denying or withholding visas for hundreds of participants to the World Social Forum (WSF) happening this week in Montreal.

The World Social Forum is a large gathering for thousands of community and social justice activists from around the globe to meet and reflect about issues that affect them locally and globally. Among others, topics like women's rights, economic rights and globalization, freedom of association and peaceful assembly are discussed. This year, it is the 12<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the event and the first time to be held in a country from the "Global North" (economically developed countries).

"The Canadian government promised a new image of Canada abroad. Deeds should follow words. Activists should be welcomed to speak in Canada and spark all sort of discussions. We need voices from different part of the world, poor countries or rich countries, to come to Canada and be heard by our youth and by our organizations and community groups" said Monia Mazigh, the National Coordinator of the ICLMG.

"Inflated security reasons, or bureaucratic reasons should not be used to censor dissident voices to come and attend the WSF. This is a forum about ideas and intellectual exchanges. All the invited participants have the right to attend and Canadian immigration officials should be helping them to attend and not denying them entry to Canada," continued Monia Mazigh.

As an example of participants denied an entry visa to the WSF in Montreal is the high-profile Malian activist Aminata Traoré, a candidate to succeed Ban Ki-moon as United Nations secretary general.

**For media inquiries:**

**The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group**

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