



13 October, 2017

Hon. Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Hon. Ralph Goodale
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

RE: Welcoming Chelsea Manning to Canada

Dear Minister Hussen and Minister Goodale:

We are writing as part of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), an international network of civil society organisations dedicated to empowering and supporting people working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment through the strategic use of information and communication technologies, to ask you to allow Chelsea Manning to enter Canada. As an organisation working on human rights and the internet, we consider this to be a freedom of expression issue. Not all Canadians will agree with what Chelsea did or what she stands for – however, Canada is a country that values freedom of expression and open dialogue, and everyone can learn something by allowing her views to be heard. Chelsea has spoken about her story with humility and courage, and if she is allowed to enter Canada, we at APC would welcome the opportunity for Canadians to learn from her experiences too.

Whether Chelsea wishes to enter Canada to continue her work as a tireless advocate for social change or simply hopes to visit friends, there is no principled reason to turn her away. After seven years in a military prison, Chelsea has served her time. Her sentence was commuted by former US President Barack Obama in January and she has been living freely in the United States since May 2017. In refusing her entry, the Canadian government claimed that Chelsea's actions would have amounted to treason had they been committed in Canada. This is a highly stigmatising label, and does not accurately reflect the nature or intent of what Chelsea did, nor the fact that she was acquitted of "aiding the enemy."

Chelsea is an internationally recognised advocate for freedom of expression, transparency, and civil liberties. She is a trans woman and is considered a role model by queer and trans people worldwide. As a whistleblower, she revealed documents that – among other things – exposed the disproportionate impact of military activities abroad on civilians, including journalists and children. She has received dozens of awards from prominent media and human rights

organisations for this work.

As a network with members in 75 countries worldwide, we stand in solidarity with the many human rights defenders and social justice advocates from around the world, and particularly in the global South, who are routinely refused visas or entry and are detained at airports. While less international attention goes to these cases, we believe that any case of an individual being denied entry to a country because of their actions or positions on human rights issues is an indignity that must be remedied.

Refusing to allow Chelsea to enter the country is a real loss for Canada and an injustice to Chelsea. Continuing to deny her entry to Canada would serve no rational benefit to public safety and would seriously undermine Canada's commitment to international justice, security, and human rights.

A decision to let Chelsea in would be a powerful affirmation of values like inclusion, diversity and fairness, to which Canada aspires. It would help to enrich the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society, promote international understanding, and provide important opportunities for education and dialogue. More than that, letting Chelsea in is simply the right thing to do.

We look forward to hearing news of your decision.

Sincerely,

Chat Garcia Ramilo
Association for Progressive Communications

Alfredo López
May First/People Link

Steve Zeltzer
LaborNet