

# Canada: Bill C-51 Could be Used to Stifle Social and Environmental Movements, Accuse Citizen Media Groups of “Supporting Terrorism”

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*Bill C-51, if made into law, might make this article and a good part of the activities of my, and other citizen media groups, acts of supporting Terrorism. And some of you engaged citizens reading this, Terrorists. If we get adjoining cells... I hope you don't snore.*

The clear intent of this bill is to stifle social, environmental and Indigenous justice movements in Canada. And in the specific wording of the Bill we see measures designed to treat those that take action on social issues in Canada like terrorists and those in the growing independent media that cover them as enemy propagandists. It is important to remember when reading the language of the proposed legislation that the *terminology* used by security services toward activists of any stripe in this country has changed in a way that make this legislation for repression. Read Profesor Kevin Walby, University of Winnipeg's excellent research in this area, click on the image. The Conservatives are counting on Canadians ignorance of the fact that if you attend a rally to save your local forest you have likely observed, identified and added to the list of « multi-issue extremists ». And this has been a fact for many years. In 2007 the RCMP and other security services started referring to activists in this way. A peaceful march or banner drop is a « non violent attack strategy ». This is a very deliberate move to be able to easily define those who protest or are socially active within the bounds of the Harper governments anti-terror laws. A non - exhaustive list of groups already deemed a threat and monitored by RCMP would include Idle No More, ForestEthics, Sierra Club, EcoSociety, LeadNow, Dogwood Initiative, Council of Canadians and the People's Summit, according to documents obtained under FOI requests by Professors Kevin Walby and Jeffrey Monaghan. Documents they obtained further stated that



Making up 'Terror Identities': security intelligence, for Canada's Integrated Threat Assessment Centre and social movement suppression

“The Canadian law enforcement and security intelligence community have noted a growing radicalized faction of environmentalists who advocate the use of criminal activity to promote the protection of the natural environment,” according to a 2011 report obtained by the Vancouver Observer “It is highly probable that environmentalists will continue to mount direct actions targeting Canada’s energy sector, specifically the petroleum sub-sector and the fossil and nuclear fueled electricity generating facilities, with the objectives of: influencing government energy policy, interfering within the energy regulatory process and forcing the energy industry to cease its operations that harm the environment,”

Part 3 amends the *Criminal Code* to, with respect to recognizances to keep the peace relating to a terrorist activity or a terrorism offence, extend their duration, provide for new thresholds, authorize a judge to impose sureties and require a judge to consider whether it is desirable to include in a recognizance conditions regarding passports and specified geographic areas. With respect to all recognizances to keep the peace, the amendments also allow hearings to be conducted by video conference and orders to be transferred to a judge in a territorial division other than the one in which the order was made and increase the maximum sentences for breach of those recognizances.

Read the draft legislation by clicking on the image.

Some of the provisions of the Bill C-51 seem aimed at making it easier to target, and criminalize, organizers individually and disrupt their work. We have a long experience here in Montréal, laboratory for the police state in Canada, of police levelling « conditions » on activists. The conditions used already under Montréal's anti-constitutional P6 bylaw seem set for export to the rest of Canada. These conditions can prevent activists from meeting with certain people, organizing or attending actions and from physically being in large geographical areas, like the downtown of their own city. The new Bill may even make it illegal for them to talk about, or report on others' activities. This is intended to destroy resistance communities by depriving them of key organizers and the tools that transformed social movements in the late 20th century.

It further amends the *Criminal Code* to provide for an offence of knowingly advocating or promoting the commission of terrorism offences in general. It also provides a judge with the power to order the seizure of terrorist propaganda or, if the propaganda is in electronic form, to order the deletion of the propaganda from a computer system.

Finally, it amends the *Criminal Code* to provide for the increased protection of witnesses, in particular of persons who play a role in respect of proceedings involving security information or criminal intelligence information, and makes consequential amendments to other Acts.

Click on the image to read the draft legislation.

This Bill, if made law, would for the first time potentially allow the government to rein in the expanding alternative media in this country and clamp down on activists use of social media to either organize or report on actions that involve even the smallest form of civil disobedience. Similar laws generally making it illegal to « glorify or promote terrorism » are already on the books in the UK and Australia even though legal scholars in both countries deplore them. When you combine this wording with the fact that the government classifies and refers to activists as extremists, it would be potentially illegal for me to continue to report on the activities of groups like Idle No More or the anti-pipeline protesters. It could be used to prevent 99media.org and other organizations from live streaming the demonstrations this spring, for the anticipated general mobilization against austerity here in Quebec and elsewhere. I would probably have been jailed for the work I did covering the « Printemps Érablé » in 2012. Just for the record Mr Harper, and I think I speak for my entire group here, I will stop reporting on the dedicated activists struggling to make this country and the world better, and leave the street, when you drag my corpse off it. No compromise.



To read about the UK experience with « antiglorification » laws, click on the image.

The Government obviously understands the power that independent media, and social media have in nurturing and promoting Indigenous, environmental, and social justice movements and are moving to limit its effect. If allowed to go forward, this legislation, coupled with the masses of anti-terror legislation already put on the books since 9/11, would give the government exceptional power to crush dissent in a « legal » manner.



Watch a CBC Fifth Estate report on OP Profung by clicking on the image.

If this all sounds like sweaty basement internet fantasy to you, then you should familiarize yourself with « Operation Profung, » an RCMP led operation that for 40 years collected the names of social activists. There were plans to simultaneously arrest them, imprison them and their families in « relocation camps ». *Don't worry, keep moving, ze dogs are here for your protection.* And any belief that the state wont do it again, is in error.

And it is not enough to trust that replacing the Harper government with beautiful Mr Trudeau will solve everything. Governments nowhere have much of a record of repealing control legislation on the books, no matter what they say. You need look no further than old Barrack "Guantanamo drone strike" Obama.

And if your looking for some hope in the Security Intelligence Review Committee controlling all of this, don't. Harper's latest appointment to this group, a man named Ian Holloway, is a former military. He is the current dean of the University of Calgary Law school, not exactly known as a hotbed of human rights. In 1996 he wrote a paper for the Australian Law revue titled, « I Stand For Liberty: *Winston Churchill* as Social Reformer ». Anyone who believes Winston was a reformer truly wouldn't even understand the term « social justice ».

So in case I'm not in enough trouble I would heartily advocate calling your MP, calling the guy who wants to be your MP and anyone else and, yes, taking to the streets. Let the powers that be in Canada know that we are not afraid. And that we will NEVER Trade our *liberty* for Mr Harper, or anyone's promise of *security*.

My friend Clifton Nicholas, Mohawk activist and film maker was called by CSIS. He was questioned simply because he had been to Greece at the invitation of Greek social groups to speak on Canadian native issues. His response to the CSIS agent is beyond priceless.

**About William Ray:** *I am a ten year veteran of the Canadian Forces. I was with the 2nd Battalion PPCLI in Croatia in 1993 when they were awarded the Governor General's commendation for bravery. I started with community radio and writing articles. In 2009 I*

*began working with CUTV Montreal. During the student strikes and subsequent social unrest I helped manage the Livestream ground teams. I am also a co-founder of 99media.org and The founder of 3RTV, both citizen media groups. I also collaborated with Michelle Moore on the documentary film Déception Durable which was selected for the 2014 Montréal International Film Festival, and Films That Matter in Calgary on resource extraction in Quebec. I am a member of the Canadian Journalists Association.*

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