

WAR RESISTERS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 7, 2009

Harper Government Orders Deportation of First Female U.S. Iraq War Resister

Canadians call on the Prime Minister to respect democracy and stop the deportations

Toronto—On Wednesday, U.S. Iraq war resister Kimberly Rivera, her husband Mario and their young children received notice that they face deportation to the United States. Their Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) applications and requests to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds were both rejected. Unless this decision is reversed they must leave the country by Tuesday, January 27 or they will be forcibly removed.

Rivera served in Iraq in 2006 and experienced, firsthand, the reality of this illegal war. In 2007 she refused redeployment and became the first female U.S. Iraq war resister to come to Canada. She now lives in Toronto with her husband Mario, son Christian (6 years), daughter Rebecca (4 years), and newborn Canadian daughter Katie (6 weeks).

“After a huge awakening in the lives of civilians who don’t get to escape the trauma or the pain and loss of people they love, I was seeing the truth and it wasn’t what we’d been led to believe,” said Kimberly Rivera. “My goal is to find a better future for my kids. Coming to Canada gave my family opportunities and hope.

A majority of Canadians continue to support U.S. Iraq war resisters. On June 3, 2008 the House of Commons passed a motion calling on the Government of Canada to immediately stop deporting war resisters and allow them to remain in Canada. The Harper government ignored this democratic decision and deported war resister Robin Long in July 2008. Long is being punished with 15 months in prison, separating him from his wife and infant son, and a felony conviction that will cause him hardship for his entire life. Four other resisters and their families face deportation this month alone.

“During the last election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged that the Iraq war was ‘absolutely an error’, but he has so far refused to support the troops who have come to the same conclusion,” said Lee Zaslofsky, spokesperson for the War Resisters Support Campaign. “The Harper government is undermining democracy by ignoring the vote of a majority of our MPs who are demanding that the Canadian tradition of allowing war resisters to stay here continue. It seems that Minister Kenney is trying to rush the deportations through before Parliament resumes to avoid growing public pressure.”

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AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW: Kimberley and Mario Rivera will be available for interviews on Wednesday, January 7 at 1:00 p.m. at the War Resisters Support Campaign office, 25 Cecil Street, Toronto, Ontario, 4th Floor.

For further information, please contact: Lee Zaslofsky, Coordinator, War Resisters Support Campaign, 416-598-1222; or Michelle Robidoux, Organiser, War Resisters Support Campaign, 416-856-5008 (cell).