

Racism on the Buses in Greater Vancouver

The following open letter was sent to Coast Mountain Bus Company regarding the unjust firing of a Lebanese Canadian activist, Marwan Marwan.

Canada Palestine Association also holds the current federal government responsible for this frightening increase in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hysteria; this government has been promoting and sanctioning this racism by its unconditional and blind support for Israel and its opposition to the Arab and Muslim peoples' liberation and control of their resources and destiny. On March 21, 2009, we warned in our statement "Jason Kenney is Promoting Racism", that such policies will promote racism. We stated:

"Mr. Kenney, his government and his Zionist friends should be held responsible for any increase in anti-Semitism, anti-Arab racism and any Islamophobic act."

Open Letter to Coast Mountain Bus Company

September 10, 2010

The following article in The Tyee "Off the Bus: Fired Driver Says He's a Victim of Politics" http://thetyee.ca/News/2010/08/04/Fired_Driver_Victim/ has recently been brought to our attention. From all indications in the article, we in the Canada Palestine Association are deeply concerned and distressed by the firing of bus driver Marwan Marwan. It appears to us that your actions could regrettably be part of the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hysteria that is engulfing this country (and continent) with no regard for basic international standards of human rights, or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, not to mention simple human decency and integrity.

We further feel that if Marwan was disciplined for his political beliefs about the situation in the "Middle East", then what happened was motivated by bigotry and Islamophobia.

We feel that Marwan's human rights were violated; he, our community and his family, including his pregnant wife and three children, were slandered and collectively punished.

Your company professes integrity in its corporate statement, saying "**Integrity** - We will act honestly and with integrity at all times. We will treat others with dignity and respect and will conduct ourselves in a manner that

will instill and foster trust.”

(<http://www.coastmountainbus.com/aboutus/statements.asp>)

Therefore, we call on Coast Mountain Company to:

- Make public its findings, as we are sure you agree that racism is everybody’s business.
- Apologize publicly to Marwan, as well as the Lebanese, Arab and Muslim communities for this racist incident.
- Fire all those who are found responsible or complicit in this bigotry which we hope is an isolated incident in the company.

We hope that the lessons of what happened to Rosa Parks 55 years ago on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama will not be overlooked in your decisions regarding a fair settlement to Marwan’s case.

We are waiting to hear from you and we will make your answer available to the public on our website.

Hanna Kawas,
Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association

<http://www.cpavancouver.org/>

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Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) <http://www.caf.ca/>

Canadian Arab Justice Committee (Adala), Vancouver <http://www.adala.ca/>

The B.C. Human Rights Tribunal <http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/>

Canadian Human Rights Commission <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/>

Amnesty International, Canada <http://www.amnesty.ca/>

(The above open letter is endorsed by Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, UBC)