

Police State Canada. The G20 Summit: Peaceful Protesters Arrested at Gun Point

Blatant Violation of Fundamental Rights

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[Justin & Lex @ G20](#) 28 June 2010

Region: [Canada](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Hello friends,

This documentation of the treatment of the G20 detainees — “protesters,” by-passers, photographers, journalists, people in the wrong place at the wrong time, including their own homes! — reveals what the mainstream media, from newspapers to broadcasting, is carefully avoiding, namely that their treatment by the “force” (the real Black Block, one could argue) was beyond the pale and akin to torture. It’s come to this: specially trained police are fully capable of and willing to subject anybody and everybody to totalitarian style degradation, subjugation and abuse. (Who trained them?) Wherever you are and whoever you are, you could be next, as there is no escape when “the plan” springs into action. Please read carefully, slowly, digest it and spread the word so as many as possible Canadians will know what Stephen Harper’s governance (if you can call it that) has brought us.

Our goal must be a full public inquiry into all aspects of police actions during G20 and the firing of the police chief, Bill Blair, who is both incompetent and unwilling to uphold the nation’s laws.

Marjaleena Repo
(in Toronto)

We (i.e., Justin Giovannetti and Lex Gill) are both able and willing to testify in front of a court of law, tribunal or hearing to attest to the validity of these statements. Much of this is now recorded on video and we have some contact information for the victims. We will NOT consent to contact with any police representatives (municipal, provincial, or federal) nor will we consent to speaking to other security agencies (CSIS, Canadian Forces, etc.). We can be contacted at [lex.gill \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:lex.gill@gmail.com), or [jackgiovannetti \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:jackgiovannetti@gmail.com).

We just got back to our computers and are frantically writing this message. It is 4:45 a.m. on Monday morning. We are the only people who seem to know the extent of this story. Coffee and adrenaline keeping us going. When we got to Queen and Spadina after leaving the Convergence Centre raid today, we had already been blocked off by police lines. It was pouring rain, and we could hear a confrontation taking place further down the street. The cops didn’t care whether or not we were media — in fact, we heard that media was forced to leave before we arrived. Police acted violently and with sheer disregard for the law, attacking peaceful protesters and civilians unrelated to the protest. Tired, frantic, and feeling defeated, we came home and posted the message before this one.

We then did the only thing left to do, and headed to 629 Eastern Avenue (the G20 Detention Centre, a converted film studio), where detainees from the demonstrations were being taken. We knew people were being released sporadically so we grabbed as many juice boxes and granola bars as we could afford and set off with medical supplies. Journalists were basically absent, showed up only to take a few seconds of video, or simply arrived far too late to be effective.

It is next to impossible to set the scene of what happened at the Detention Centre. Between the two of us we estimate that we spoke to over 120 people, most of whom were released between 9:30 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. Despite not knowing each other, the story they tell is the same. It goes like this. Most were arrested at three locations: the Novotel on Saturday evening where the police arrested hundreds of peaceful protesters (look @spaikin on Twitter); Spadina/Queen's Park all day Saturday and early Sunday, as people were arrested all over the downtown for many different (and often bogus) reasons; and the University of Toronto, where hundreds of Quebecers and others were woken up and arrested at gun point early Saturday morning.

What follows is a list, as detailed as we can make it in a blog post, of what we saw and heard.

People were held for up to 35 hours with a single meal. None seemed to have received food more than twice daily, the meal they did receive was a hamburger bun with processed cheese and margarine described as a centimeter thick. Detainees had to create loud noises for hours to receive any food at all. All reported feeling more ill and dehydrated after eating than before. Some vomited and received no medical attention when they did. Water was not provided with the meal.

Inadequate water, as little as an ounce every 12 hours. Although some people reported receiving approximately an ounce (a small Dixie cup) of water every three hours, most seemed to have received far less than that. They had to create loud noises and continuously demand water, only to receive it up to an hour and a half later. Sometimes rooms with over a dozen people were only given a handful (four or five) cups of water and forced to share. Some reported the water as yellow-coloured and smelling of urine, which they didn't drink.

Facilities over-capacity. There were many reports of "cages" filled with 40 people, though a police officer told one detainee that they were intended for groups of no more than 15 to 20. Each cage had a single bench, with only enough seating for five people. There was only one toilet in each cage and it was without a door. Women were creating barriers with their bodies for others to create some semblance of privacy.

Major delays in processing. Many detainees were told that the only reason they remained at the Centre was due to unexplained delays in processing. Most detainees seemed to go through a three step system whereby they were put in an initial holding cell, only to be moved to a second cell after meeting a Staff Sergeant in a board room. This is where they were told what they were arrested for. Eventually they were moved to a third cell before release. This process seemed to take no less than 10 hours. Others were never told why they were arrested and never signed any documents. A few were released immediately upon arriving at the Centre and were never processed. Some were never brought to a cell, only made to wait in a line to be let out.

Inconsistent charges. Groups arrested at the same time and for the same behaviour were given different charges, with some let out and others given court dates. Many felt the police simply assigned a charge or did not know why they were being arrested. Some charges were changed or dropped before the detainees were released.

People put in solitary confinement. Most of the openly gay detainees reported to have been transferred to a “Segregated Zone.” In cages built for one, couples of men and women were held. A lesbian is reported to have spent nearly 10 hours alone. Another woman said she was kept alone in a large cell for hours, asking to be moved the whole time.

No pillows or mattresses to sleep. No bedding was ever provided for detainees, who were told to sleep on bare concrete floors. Detainees were stripped of all but a single shirt and legwear. Many said they could not sleep during their day long detentions.

Unsanitary and unsafe living conditions. Many of the floors of the cages were covered with dirt and the residue from green paintballs used to identify suspects in crowds. Vomit was also on the floor and no cleaning of the cages took place.

Police intimidation of released detainees. With many of the detainees released and standing across the street from the detention centre, getting food and water from community volunteers while waiting for friends, police stood menacingly across the road. Almost all the detainees were frightened by the police presence and feared an attack. The police used the headlights of rental Dodge Caravans to light up the crowd, citing a need to “keep them visible.”

Non-stop light exposure/loss of natural light rhythm/sensory deprivation. Detainees emerged with a broken day/night cycle, being deprived of all connection to the outside world or any other time-based events (ie. set eating times). While in their cages, detainees were subject to constant light.

Exposure to extreme cold. Detainees complained of the air conditioning in the building being very high. Many of them said that they were frozen and asked for blankets, a request which was always refused. Due to having only a single layer of shirt and sleeping on concrete floors, the cages were extremely cold.

Sexual harassment of women and Gay people. We heard many first-hand accounts of cat-calls and crude sexual comments directed at women from police officers at the Centre. Some women faced inappropriate sexual contact (including one girl who was forced to endure a police officer covering her body with detainee number stickers in order to touch her), and rough handling from police officers. Openly Gay boys were told to “straighten up,” and there was at least one completely nude strip search preformed on a young woman with no reasonable explanation. It is unclear whether the strip searches that took place were consistently conducted by members of the same gender. It is also unclear as to whether any Transpeople, if detained, were put in cells of a gender of their own determination or in cells of a police gender assignment.

Youth as young as 15 in adult cells. Youth (under 18) detainees were held in the same cells as adults, some of whom had not been charged at all (and thus it could not be justified that they were being held on adult charges). A 16-year-old was held in an adult cell for at least 12 hours, the police were fully aware of his age, and his parents were at no point contacted.

Denial of legal counsel. When detainees asked to see lawyers they were told that they would receive legal counsel at a later time or at the time of processing. Often, these times went by and no legal counsel was provided. Those released without charge were told to avoid contacting lawyers. Most detainees said they were never informed of their rights.

No phone call. About only one in ten of the detainees we spoke to had been given access to a phone. Others were promised access at a later time and never received it. There was a father waiting outside for his 20-year old son who had been arrested Saturday afternoon or evening, and had yet to receive a call. Many of the detainees were told that only 20 phones were available in the building, holding over 500 detainees at the time. The offices of legal counsel also had no landlines.

Belonging stolen/damaged. Most detainees reported that at least some of their confiscated belongings were not returned to them, including passports, wallets, credit and debit cards, money, cellphones and clothing. When detainees were escorted outside the Centre, many were made to walk on the street without access to their shoes (sealed in thick plastic bags only returned at the limit of the Centre's property). Some shoes were missing entirely. At least one extremely visually impaired detainee's glasses were put with his belongings and were severely damaged when he recovered them (ie. broken in half).

Threats of assault/harassment. Many detainees, but especially French Canadian detainees (who were not served in French), were taunted and threatened with assault. Homophobic slurs were used by guards and one was told that if he was ever seen again in Toronto the cop would attack him. Other degrading comments were made, including telling detainees that they "looked like dogs."

Obviously illegal civilian arrests. Some civilians who were completely uninvolved in the demonstrations were arrested while exiting subway stations in the downtown core. Some were arrested after illegal searches of cars turned up "dangerous goods" (like books about activism and lemon juice). One fully-uniformed TTC streetcar driver was arrested for hours. He had been ordered out of his streetcar by riot police and was immediately arrested. We wish we were kidding.

No access to medication or medical treatment. While doing medical support, Lex met at least two people who had been denied medication. The first was a woman who said that she was pre-diabetic and needed medication for nausea and dizziness. She was denied access to medical treatment, despite the fact that by the time Lex found her she was extremely faint, barely conscious, and had difficulty sitting up. The second was a young man who was prescribed anti-psychotics and had missed several doses (he did not, however, have an episode at the time Lex met him). We heard stories of at least one person with Type 2 diabetes inside the Centre who had been deprived of insulin and fell unconscious. Many stories of a man handcuffed to a wheelchair, missing a leg (and his prosthetic) came from the released detainees. One recently-released detainee had four extremely poorly done stitches on his chin and was uncertain as to what shots (whether tetanus or anesthetic, or both) he was given. He was given the stitches at the time of his arrest and the wound was still bleeding badly (we had to sterilize it and applied gauze).

Abandonment Despite all of the above mentioned crimes against detainees, most notably including medical issues, the Toronto Police had no plan for the detainees after they were released. They were simply escorted off the property and told to leave. Many had no idea where they were, had no access to a phone, had not eaten in a day, had no identification or

money on their person, and were nowhere near mass transit. Had community volunteers and fellow released detainees not been present to assist them, we fear that some could have faced life-threatening medical emergencies or death.

We will be continually updating this blog over the next few weeks. Please share this with everyone you possibly can. People must know what has happened in Toronto. For those of you attending the Jail Solidarity rally tomorrow, please distribute this link widely.

QUICK UPDATE: Its been five hours since we posted this entry and it's climbing by hundreds of hits every half hour. According to those on the ground, detainees leaving the Centre seem to now be avoiding the group of supporters outside waiting for them. We fear this is due to police intimidation within 629 Eastern Ave..

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