

March 6th 2006
News Item
For Immediate Release:

Vancouver Anti-War Coalition Responds to Crisis in Canadian Occupation of Afghanistan
CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!
STOP THE CANADIAN WAR DRIVE!
INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CANADA'S OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN!

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EMERGENCY PICKET ACTION AGAINST CANADA'S OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN

Monday March 6th
12 Noon
Canada Forces Recruitment Centre
1070 W. Georgia St Vancouver

EMERGENCY PRESS CONFERENCE

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FEATURING:

Lisa Barrett – Councilor and Former Mayor of Bowen Island, and Local Organizer of Code Pink Women for Peace
Shannon Bundock – Co-Chair of Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)

Vancouver's anti-war coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has called an emergency press conference and picket line action at the Canadian Forces Recruitment Centre in downtown Vancouver to respond to a week of daily attacks on Canadian occupation forces in Afghanistan with a CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CANADA'S OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN and the demand: CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!

On the morning of Thursday March 2nd, just 48 hours after command of the NATO occupation forces in Southern Afghanistan was handed over to Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser, Canadian Cpl. Paul James Davis of Bridgewater Nova Scotia was killed when his military vehicle "flipped over" during a "routine patrol" in Kandahar Afghanistan. Seven others were injured in the crash. Attacks on Canadian soldiers continued in the hours and days that followed. In the suicide bomb, roadside bomb, and axe attacks that occurred at least every 24 hours on Thursday March 2nd, Friday March 3rd, Saturday March 4th and Sunday March 5th, two Canadian soldiers were killed, and at least 12 were wounded, some critically.

MAWO Co-Chair Shannon Bundock explained these attacks in the context of the escalation of Canada's military occupation of Afghanistan: "It is no coincidence that Canadian troops are under attack in the increasingly violent "combat mission" that is Canada's occupation of Afghanistan," Bundock said. "There are 2,300 troops stationed in Kandahar. Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser is leading the NATO forces in 'tracking down' the Afghan people that Rick Hillier and the Government of Canada refer to as 'scumbags and murderers'. This is a war drive. Already we are seeing that Canada's 'top soldier' Rick Hillier's predictions about this combat mission are coming true – Canadian soldiers are coming home in body bags."

MAWO's emergency picket comes on the heels of an earlier action in front of the downtown military recruitment centre on the afternoon of March 2nd that made news Canada-wide.

"The occupation of Afghanistan has already cost more than \$2Billion in Canadian taxpayers' money, and the Government won't even issue estimates of the full cost of the occupation until the end of the year. Why are they stalling?" Bundock asked, "MAWO demands that the Harper Government immediately reveal the real costs to taxpayers of the occupation of Afghanistan."

Bundock said, "The occupation of Afghanistan has already cost more than 10Thousand innocent Afghan lives and now 11 lives of people shipped there by the Government of Canada. What have we, as working and poor people in Canada or in Afghanistan gained from these costs? Bloodshed. Why is the Canadian army occupying Afghanistan? The Government of Canada isn't telling the truth."