



13 December, 2019

To: Global Affairs Canada, Chilean Embassy in Ottawa, and the Chilean Federation of Worker Co-operatives

Letter in Solidarity with the Chilean people

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation expresses its our heartfelt solidarity with the Chilean people and with TRASOL – the Chilean Federation of Worker Co-operatives. In recent weeks we have borne witness to outrageous scenes of abuse committed by military and police forces against the people of Chile, who have risen up to fight against the oppressive economic conditions imposed by the government. To date, the military repression has left behind dozens of dead and disappeared people and thousands of injured people. The New York City-based NGO Human Rights Watch is calling for urgent police reform in Chile to address what it calls “grave human rights violations.”

The Chilean government carries with it a legacy of repression since the military dictatorship of Pinochet, enforcing policies that work to put wealth in the hands of the few. The measures that were put forth to raise the cost of public transportation, for perspective, account for 21% of the minimum wage. This was unprecedented. Although after facing the protests, the government had to rescind their proposed measures to hike up the price of public transportation, the people have exploded into protests making it clear that the economic austerity goes far beyond the recently proposed government measures.

What is happening in Chile is the result of the tactics employed by neoliberal governments that include: privatization of education, lack of health services, the pension system crisis, and low wages, all while the wealth of the political elite continues to accumulate. These conditions resonate with our reality here in Canada as we fight against paralyzing student debt, an increasingly privatized health care system, gentrification and homelessness, as well as the growing gap between the rich and the poor. That is why we express our solidarity with the people and the workers who are rising up in Chile, with calls for social, economic and political transformation. Our work and action as worker co-operators guide us toward a transformation that will improve conditions for workers, based on the principles of racial, gender and economic justice.

As representatives of the worker co-operative movement, we are clear that social transformation is imperative and that we must build alternatives to the neoliberal model. We urge you to take action to encourage the government of Chile to implement police and military reform to cease the human rights violations on an urgent basis, and to enact socio-economic policies which serve working people.

In solidarity,

Reba Plummer, President, and

Hazel Corcoran, Executive Director