

**Comité de soutien d'  
Abdelkader Belaoui**

**Support Committee for  
Abdelkader Belaoui**

**STATEMENT – Tuesday October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**DIGNITÉ POUR ABDELKADER**



**A community wins! Justice for Kader**

On January 3, 2006, Abdelkader Belaoui took an inspirational stand against the unjust and discriminatory practices of Citizenship & Immigration Canada. Making his first public appearance at a press conference held at St. Gabriel's church, where he had taken sanctuary 3 days earlier, Kader stated "I'm not hiding from Immigration Canada, but I want to tell them clearly, I will not be presenting myself for deportation. I've been able to achieve autonomy and dignity in Montreal, and I don't want to lose that. My family are my friends here. I am here to defend myself; I am here to defend justice."

Now, almost 4 years later, we have called this press conference to announce that Kader is able to step outside the church grounds without the threat of deportation, having finally received his permanent residency after a tireless campaign. The decision to refuse Kader status on humanitarian grounds by CIC discriminated against him, as it does against others, by reproducing forms of structural discrimination that are already present in society. In Kader's case, he suffered from a kind of double jeopardy, as being blind and of Algerian/Muslim background both worked against him.

Despite Kader and his support committee's attempts at highlighting this discrimination and the unjust CIC decision over the years, four immigration ministers from two separate governments have callously allowed Kader to remain without status all this time, despite being able to intervene on his behalf. However, the lack of responsiveness from many government figures did not prevent Kader and his support committee from mounting an impressive grassroots campaign, through letter-writing initiatives, rallies, neighbourhood BBQs, cultural shows, art & musical collaborations, and more.

Over the years, Kader's campaign for status has received heart-warming and inspirational support and solidarity from hundreds of individuals and organisations, including unions, religious groups, student associations, migrant justice organisations and community groups. This support has stretched from Kader's neighborhood of Pointe St-Charles to the rest of the island of Montreal, ultimately spanning across the country and even internationally. It goes without saying that the victory we are announcing today would not have been possible without the contributions of so many over the past few years. It is important to note that unlike hundreds of thousands of other non-status people in Canada, who have been forced underground to lead a life of daily precarity haunted by the ever-looming threats of detention and deportation, Kader was able to bring his case to the public because of the relative protection afforded him by sanctuary and his community.

We would like to acknowledge the courageous stand taken by Father MacDonald and St. Gabriel's church, who made the just decision to offer Kader sanctuary at the church, especially in a context where the inspirational sanctuary movement of the 1970's and 1980's is sadly but a distant memory for many. From sanctuary at the church, Kader was able to lead, along with his support committee, an epic grassroots campaign for justice, demanding an immediate regularization of his status, and highlighting the many injustices of the Canadian immigration system.

Today marks a significant victory not only for Kader and his supporters, but for the international movement for migrant justice - a movement which confronts violent and repressive immigration and border policies that put profit over people...a movement that seeks to build a world without borders, in which people can move freely, with dignity.

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