



Migrant farmworkers ask Trudeau for Permanent Residency in Canada as they announce caravan to Ottawa

By
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'Justice is 50 years overdue', migrant farmworkers call for real change in 2016

WHAT: Media Briefing to launch historic 'Harvesting Freedom' caravan to Ottawa WHEN: 10 am, Monday, January 25, 2016. WHE

'Fifty years of injustice is enough' is the rallying cry that members of Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW) will be bringing to the corridors of Parliament this Monday January 25th. The advocacy group will launch their historic 'Harvesting Freedom' campaign. The campaign calls on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to grant migrant farmworkers immigration status upon arrival rather than the current model that leaves workers vulnerable to abuse. 'Harvesting Freedom' is a year-long campaign that begins today and will feature a Pilgrimage to Ottawa set to arrive on October 2nd, 2016.

J4MW will be holding a press conference at 10 am in the Charles Lynch room in the Centre block of Parliament. Following the press conference, migrant workers will be visiting the office of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (80 Wellington street) to urge him to support the call to action by Justicia for Migrant Workers.

"Status for migrant workers is the only solution to the injustices that we face daily in the fields" says Ricky Joseph, a Caribbean migrant farm worker. "We are fearful of being deported from Canada for standing up for our rights. All we are asking for is for fairness for all workers across the board."

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) is a labour-migration program that brings approximately 30,000 migrant workers from the Caribbean and Mexico annually to work in fields across Canada. The program began in 1966 between Canada and Jamaica. Migrant workers who arrive under this program face many challenges working in Canada, including: having work permits tied to a single employer; being under constant threat of deportation by employers, and never being eligible for permanent residency regardless of how many years they have worked in Canada.

"Low-waged workers like myself coming to Canada in the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the Caregiver Program are tied to a single employer by their work permit", says Gina, a Filipina temporary foreign worker employed in greenhouses in Ontario. "This means we are subject to abuse and exploitation and separation from our families. I witnessed many migrant workers who are exploited and can't speak up because of the fear of being deported and losing this job."

"Actions will take place across Canada to highlight the resistance that migrant farm workers have undertaken to counter the exploitation they face as a result of inhumane immigration policies" says Tzazna Miranda Leal, an organizer with J4MW. J4MW is a grassroots advocacy group based in Toronto, Vancouver, and Mexico City composed of migrant workers and allies. We advocate and organize to improve rights and protections for workers in Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program including migrant workers employed under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

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SOURCE: Justicia for Migrant Workers

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