



Centre commémoratif
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

Press release, for immediate release

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre urges the Canadian government to remove Hungary from the list of designated countries of origin

Montreal, December 14, 2012 – The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (MHMC) finds it regrettable that the Canadian government has included East European countries, Hungary among them, in the list of designated countries of origin (DCO) created by the so-called Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act, formerly known as Bill C-31.

When Bill C-31, which modifies the refugee protection system, received royal assent, the MHMC publicly appealed to the government to apply these measures with extreme caution. *“The fact that a government is elected democratically does not necessarily mean that it will assure the safety and equal treatment of a country's minority”*, maintains Daniel Rabinowicz, member of the MHMC's Board of Directors. *“The Canadian refugee status determination system already evaluates each case on its own merits.”* The MHMC is concerned that the Government of Canada has already dismissed certain refugee cases as unfounded, especially in the case of countries like Hungary, where extreme right movements commit acts of violence with impunity and where a member of parliament has recently called for a list of all the Jews of the country.

This decision contradicts the words of Mr. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism who, in January 2011 at the inauguration of a monument commemorating the fate of the Jewish passengers of the MS St Louis, promised not to commit the same errors as were committed by Canada before and during World War II. As soon as the DCO list was set up, the MHMC called on the government to respect this commitment, as well as the Canadian tradition of openness and solidarity with all refugees. Thus the government should take into consideration human rights violations in certain parts of Europe, as well as hostile actions against certain groups, among them the Jews and Roma of Hungary.

The list of designated countries of origin allows the government to identify countries deemed unlikely to produce refugees, in part because of their democratically elected governments. Asylum seekers from these countries will be given a shorter period of time for the preparation and judgment of their claim and, as opposed to other asylum seekers, they will not be entitled to appeal processes and will not have access to health care.

Faced with such issues the Board of Directors of the MHMC has adopted a policy of taking public positions in order to best fulfill the mandate that the survivors of the Holocaust conferred on the Centre when it was founded in 1979.

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust, while sensitizing the public to the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference.

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