



*For immediate release (English version)*

## **National Defense Act needs to better reflect the times**

### **Time to repeal imprisonment for "disloyal" comments about monarch**

**Toronto, October 28, 2006** - Canada's republican movement is calling on the federal government to bring the National Defense Act into the twenty-first century by removing the penalty for members of the Armed Forces speaking openly about the monarchy. Presently, the Act 's section on dealing with spying, mutiny and desertion also covers "Disgraceful Conduct - Traitorous or disloyal utterances," which states the following:

***"Every person who uses traitorous or disloyal words regarding Her Majesty is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years or to less punishment."***

"It's shocking that in 2006, this extreme wording remains in the National Defence Act," says Tom Freda, national director of Citizens for a Canadian Republic. "Legislation including imprisonment for criticizing the head of state puts us in the company of despotic regimes such as Belarus, Iran, North Korea and Syria."

Most democratic countries that value free speech merely allow for a court martial, such as in the U.S.A. There, it's referred to as 'contemptuous words,' with no reference to being 'traitorous or disloyal' and it applies only to commissioned officers. In Canada, it applies to all military 'persons.'

In calling for changes to the National Defence Act, Citizens for a Canadian Republic is also supporting Royal Military College Captain Aralt Mac Giolla Chainnigh's legal action to address the requirement for Forces members to publicly display their loyalty to the British monarchy. Mr. Mac Giolla Chainnigh, who is not a member of Citizens for a Canadian Republic, is an associate professor of physics at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario and is challenging the military's conventions of saluting during the ceremonial singing of God Save The Queen and while displaying the Union Jack. Refusal to comply with either could be interpreted as disloyalty.

"There seems to be a colonial mentality here," says Freda. "God Save the Queen is foremost, the national anthem of a foreign nation, the United Kingdom, and the Union Jack their official flag. Would it not be more prudent for our soldiers to be saluting O Canada and the Maple Leaf flag?"

#### **ABOUT CITIZENS FOR A CANADIAN REPUBLIC**

***Citizens for a Canadian Republic*** is a registered non-partisan, not-for-profit organization advocating the Canadianization of the head of state since 2002. More information is available at CCR's website.

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