

The Honourable Ralph Goodale
Minister of Public Safety and
Emergency Preparedness
Ralph.Goodale@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Immigration,
Refugees and Citizenship
Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

13 October 2017

Re: Denial of Entry to Canada for Chelsea Manning

Dear Ministers Goodale and Hussen;

Amnesty International Canada is deeply troubled by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) decision to deny Chelsea Manning entry into Canada on 22 September 2017. We are writing to urge that the decision be reversed or overturned and that she be allowed to enter Canada.

Ms. Manning is a human rights defender. She is a whistleblower who exposed evidence of potential human rights violations and breaches of international law by the United States military. For this act of conscience she has already been penalized and served her time. President Obama commuted her unduly long sentence in January 2017 and she has been freed from imprisonment.

Ms. Manning has done much more than enjoy her newly-reinstated freedoms and liberties. As a human rights activist, she works tirelessly to ensure that all people may enjoy the full range of rights enshrined under international law. Ms. Manning's personal history has led her to become a prominent voice on a multitude of human rights issues. Not only has she been willing to risk her own freedom to expose potential human rights violations—a choice for which she endured cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture—but during her term of imprisonment she was also forced to suffer the trauma of solitary confinement. Consequently, she has become an outspoken activist for the rights of all prisoners to just and humane detention conditions. As a high-profile transgender woman, Ms. Manning is also a prominent advocate for LGBTQ+ rights worldwide. Furthermore, her activism in the areas of civil liberties and government transparency has earned her dozens of awards and tributes from prominent human rights and media organizations.

There is no reason to believe Ms. Manning poses a legitimate risk to public safety in Canada. By refusing her entry into this country the CBSA has unilaterally decided—through procedures lacking in basic due process—that Ms. Manning's former actions as a whistleblower would have constituted treason, had they been committed in Canada. Deeming her actions treasonous overlooks the fact that she was acquitted in a United States court of law of "aiding the enemy" and that none other than the President of the United States himself commuted her sentence.

Equating her actions with treason is deeply stigmatizing, and does not reflect the nature or intent of Ms. Manning's actions. Ms. Manning exposed evidence of human rights violations because she was acting in the public interest, upholding justice and the rule of law. These are values Canadians embrace, not reasons to prevent someone from crossing into Canadian territory.

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Allowing Ms. Manning to enter Canada would, in fact, be to Canada's benefit. Because of her experiences, she is uniquely positioned to enhance Canadians' understandings of many pressing and current international human rights issues. Allowing her entry indicates that Canada is a country that embraces human rights defenders. It shows that we are open to hearing about the challenges faced globally by LGBTQ+ persons. It says we will not stigmatize those who insist their governments be held accountable for potential breaches of international law and violations of human rights. Allowing Ms. Manning entry would enrich the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society; it would not put Canadians at risk.

Conversely, continuing to deny entry to Ms. Manning would be a great loss to Canada. Canadians would not be afforded the opportunity to engage with her in discussions of human rights issues. On a more concerning note, denying Ms. Manning entry to Canada sends a troubling message that the government of Canada believes her actions as a whistleblower were treasonous. That carries an implication that Canada does not believe states should be investigated and held accountable for potential human rights violations. This deeply undermines Canada's commitment for international justice, security, and human rights and weakens Canada's voice as a defender of these values on the global stage.

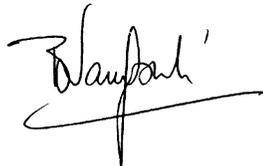
Amnesty International Canada's English and Francophone branches urge Canada to allow Chelsea Manning to enter into Canada. Notably, if she is allowed to come here, we would be honoured to host Ms. Manning as a speaker at an Amnesty International event, something we know would be of broad interest.

We would be pleased to provide any further information you may require and can be contacted through Alex Neve's Executive Assistant Aden Seaton at aseaton@amnesty.ca or 613 744 7667, extension 263.

Sincerely,



Alex Neve
Secretary General
Amnesty International Canada
(English branch)



Béatrice Vaugrante
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