

How to write a letter of support for Iván Apaolaza Sancho

Address your letters to:

Diane Finley
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Room 707, Confederation Bldg House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
Finley.D@parl.gc.ca or Ministre@cic.gc.ca

Stockwell Day
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
day.s@parl.gc.ca or days1@parl.gc.ca

Demands that should be supported in your letter:

- An immediate release of Ivan from detention and immediate freedom for all political prisoners.
- An end to Ivan's deportation proceedings and the end to Canadian complicity in the use of torture.
- Refugee status for Ivan and an end to the two-tiered justice system for non-citizens in Canada.

Key points to mention:

- You are writing in regards to the inadmissibility proceedings of Ivan Apaolaza Sancho.
- Ivan has never been convicted of a crime in Spain. In his six years in Canada thus far, he has never been accused of any criminal activities.
- No evidence has been actually been presented to support the list of allegations against Ivan – it is simply a list of accusations from Spain that is being considered to be “evidence” in this case.
- The list of accusations against Ivan clearly matches up to a declaration made by a Basque woman during her interrogation by Spanish authorities. When brought before a judge she not only denied the declaration but also confirmed that she had been tortured when she made it. Thus, what is being considered “evidence” against is Ivan was obtained under torture.
- Ivan will likely be tortured if he is deported to Spain. Under Spanish anti-terrorism laws, a five to thirteen day incommunicado detention period is permitted during which many detainees have reported torture. (This practice of incommunicado detention and the use of torture by Spanish authorities have been

- denounced by various human rights organizations including the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture and Amnesty International.)
- Canada is a signatory of the Convention Against Torture, and thus holds a responsibility to prevent deportations and extraditions to torture.
 - The inclusion of a group or individual on a terrorist list does NOT constitute any evidence of that group or individual's involvement in terrorist activities.
 - Ivan has already spent over 6 months in detention (most of that time under maximum security) without any evidence having presented against him – a clear violation of the Canadian Charter.
 - Despite his family offering a significant sum of money as a guarantee for him respecting his bail conditions (routine practice in immigration detention proceedings), CBSA officials continue to deny him freedom during his hearing process.
 - The Spanish state is notorious for its violent repression of Basque nationalists and leftists – repression which includes sweeping criminalization, arbitrary detention, judiciary irregularities, torture, etc...
 - The legitimacy of Spain's allegations against Ivan is weak and highly questionable given the wide documentation of Spain's abuses of Basque nationalist groups and individuals – specifically through their false designation as ETA members or supporters.
 - It is unacceptable that non-citizens in Canada be deprived of the minimal right to a fair trial, with an acceptable level of openly disclosed evidence – such practice continues the upholding of a two-tiered justice system in Canada (a practice used for example in the cases of the Security Certificate detainees).

 - (Remember to date and sign your letters.)

 - (Letters on letterheads if from organizations would be helpful.)

For more information or assistance in writing letters of support for Ivan, please contact:

The Freedom for Ivan Committee:
libertepourivan@gmail.com
514-848-7583

Sample letter follows

Thursday February 28, 2008

Att: Minister Diane Finley
Minister Stockwell Day

Re: Inadmissibility proceedings for Ivan Apaolaza Sancho

Dear Ministers,

I am writing to you to express our deep concern over the detention and pending deportation of Mr. Ivan Apaolaza Sancho, a thirty-six year old Basque refugee claimant who is currently detained in the Riviere des Prairies detention centre in Montreal.

It has come to my attention that Mr. Apaolaza Sancho has been detained at RDP for over six months now without any evidence having presented to substantiate the accusations against him in what is a clear violation of the Canadian charter.

Furthermore, it is unacceptable that the accusations which have been made against him seem to clearly originate from a declaration made under torture by a Basque woman during her interrogation by Spanish authorities. The fact that such so-called evidence would be used to support a deportation to likely torture is not only a violation of fundamental rights but is also a contravention to Canada's duties as a signatory of the U.N. Convention against Torture. Our government has an obligation to prevent extraditions and deportations to torture which in Mr. Apaolaza Sancho's case seems highly probable.

The reliability of accusations made by the Spanish state, known for its repression of Basques and supporters of the Basque nationalist movement, is highly questionable. There are hundreds of Basque political prisoners and political refugees. Denunciations of the use of torture and incommunicado detention against Basques at the hands of Spanish authorities have been made by a score of recognized human rights organizations as well as Amnesty International and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture.

Mr. Apaolaza Sancho clearly came to Canada to be able to lead a life of peace and dignity, as he has demonstrated over the past six years. I urge you to allow him this measure of justice by releasing him immediately from detention, putting an end to his deportation proceedings and granting him refugee status.

Sincerely,