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**By Mail and Email**

14 March 2013

Luc Portelance  
CBSA President  
Canada Border Services Agency  
Ottawa ON  
K1A 0L8

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Dear Mr. Portelance:

**RE: CBSA Raids on Migrant Workers**

The BC Civil Liberties Association is deeply concerned by media reports that CBSA officers conducted a raid on a Vancouver construction site yesterday, in the presence of a reality TV camera crew. This TV crew was permitted to follow CBSA officers as they pursued individuals and made arrests.

It is our understanding that the sought individuals were migrants. Migrant workers in Canada must be considered a vulnerable group for a number of reasons. Migrant workers are often subjected to low wages and inferior living conditions. They are often refugee claimants who have been persecuted or tortured in their home country. The CBSA must demonstrate professionalism and integrity in all its actions, particularly so when carrying out raids of this nature. It is our position that the presence of a reality TV show camera crew violates the privacy rights and potentially threatens the security of these persons.

The CBSA, as the enforcement branch of the Canadian government's immigration system, must demonstrate sensitivity to vulnerable individuals regardless of their circumstances or legal status in this country. CBSA officers must show respect and professionalism in carrying out their mandate. We are concerned that this operation was not conducted in a manner that demonstrates even a basic understanding of the intercultural context or an awareness of the particular vulnerabilities of these individuals.

We are also concerned about what measures CBSA used to obtain consent of individuals to being filmed and ultimately to be featured in a reality TV show.

Even if consent forms were provided, it is our position that it is impossible for such consent to be considered informed or voluntary under the circumstances. Furthermore, the potential use of individuals' images on television raises significant concerns for the security of these individuals and their families who may be residing in or be deported to a country where their safety is at risk.

In addition to the vulnerabilities mentioned, the use of these individuals for an entertainment show is morally repugnant.

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We respectfully request you immediately investigate these allegations and provide the public with an explanation of what happened. We also request that you provide us with any policies authorizing the presence of camera crews during CBSA raids and arrests of non-citizens and governing the use of such footage. Finally, we ask that CBSA immediately cease and desist its participation in this television show project and filming any of its operations for commercial and/or entertainment purposes.

We are sending a copy of this letter to the CBSA Privacy Coordinator in relation to the privacy concerns mentioned.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JP', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Josh Paterson  
Executive Director

cc: The Honourable Vic Toews P.C., Q.C., M.P.  
cc: The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.  
cc: CBSA Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator