



**For Immediate Release
July 8 2010**

New interactive website shines spotlight on 'The Real G8/G20'

Toronto - ***The Real G8/G20: A Civil Society Response*** is a content-rich forum for citizen media: video, film, photography and editorial works by artists, activists, social justice organizations and independent media. The site launches this week at **www.therealg8g20.com** and is inviting the general public to submit content.

"Our mainstream media has failed to report the real issues that have motivated thousands of people to protest the G8/G20 Summits. It has failed to critically address the intimidation, abuse and illegal actions of the police, which have resulted in the broad abuse of our civil rights," reads an official statement from the Toronto-based group of media and film activists behind the site. The effort was initiated by social-issue documentary filmmaker **Liz Marshall** (*Water On The Table*, *Girls of Latitude*, *Grandmothers: The Unsung Heroes of Africa*) as a response to her firsthand experiences at the G8/G20 summits, and the media coverage that followed.

"I participated in two wonderfully inspiring protests - in Huntsville and on the streets of Toronto with thousands of peaceful protesters. The message was loud and clear: issues of global economic, social and climate injustice are paramount in our world, and things must change; we must be listened to and consulted with. It takes a lot of courage and tenacity to be a committed activist in this day and age, but that's not celebrated. Instead, the mainstream media focuses on sensationalistic violence and vandalism and not on the issues voiced by the majority. I formed this group in response to the shameful ways our mainstream media reflects protest. We hope that The Real G8G20 becomes the hub for this conversation, and a showcase of diverse expressions about the real issues."

"At moments of social conflict, it is important that journalists and independent media have the freedom to do their jobs - to witness and document events of public interest," says **John Christou, Chair of the Documentary Organization of Canada**, a participating organization in *The Real G8/G20: A Civil Society Response*. "During the G20 protests in Toronto, that freedom was repeatedly violated. Journalists and



documentary filmmakers were victims of seemingly unprovoked attacks by police. The number and pattern of these accounts make it clear that an independent inquiry into the treatment of media by police during the G20 summit is necessary."

"More than twenty-five thousand people showed tremendous resolve and bravery, marching peacefully through the streets of Toronto surrounded by heavily armed riot police to speak out against the closed door nature of the summits," said **Maude Barlow, chairperson of the Council of Canadians**, which, along with **rabble.ca**, is supporting the Real G8/G20 initiative. "Then one thousand endured intimidation, unlawful and often violent arrest and detention. But instead of cowering, those who took to the streets during the summits are sharing stories, posting videos and pictures - they're brave and committed to really showing what happened on the streets that weekend and will force our government to do the same."

Join the conversation. Visit the "Submit Content" page:
www.therealg8g20.com/submit

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