

# AN URGENT APPEAL

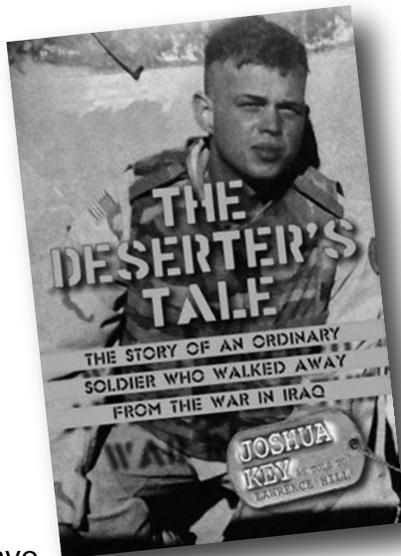
## SUPPORT CANADIAN SANCTUARY FOR WAR RESISTER JOSHUA KEY



It was in 2004 that Joshua Key and his then American born wife and family arrived in Toronto after Joshua refused to return to combat duty in Iraq. In doing so Joshua joined a growing number of U.S war resisters who had come to Canada seeking refugee status because of their belief that the U.S. war in Iraq was unjust.

Not long after he arrived, Joshua and journalist Lawrence Hill, award winning author of *The Book of Negroes*, wrote the book *The Deserter's Tale*. In it he chronicled his experiences that led him to undertake the difficult decision to desert rather than fight in an illegal and immoral war.

Since then, Canadians have mobilized to ensure that US soldiers who refused to participate in the war in Iraq be allowed to stay in Canada. Despite two resolutions passed by the House of Commons in support of war resisters' right to stay, numerous court rulings in their favour and the fact that



almost two-thirds of Canadians support giving sanctuary to war resisters, successive Conservative governments under Steven Harper have not listened to the House of Commons, the courts or public opinion.

A Government which trumpets belief in Canadian democracy, values and human rights has been relentless in its persecution of these conscientious objectors. As a result many have faced deportations and harsh prison sentences handed down in U.S. military courts.

This fight is not over. It has entered a most difficult period as the Harper Government seeks to finish off the remaining war resisters in a new wave of deportations. It hopes that Canadians have resigned themselves to the fact that nothing can be done and lost interest in the plight of the principled individuals who said no to war.

But Canadians have not forgotten. In recent months and weeks new support has been forthcoming. The University of Winnipeg Students' Association and the Winnipeg Labour Council have endorsed resolutions in support of Joshua Key and the right of war resisters to stay in Canada.

We have issued this appeal for Joshua because he is part of the community we live in. That is why an ad hoc committee of Winnipeg residents have come together to lend our support and efforts to the campaign. Joshua is our neighbour and our friend. He took a principled stand to walk away from war at great personal cost and risk to himself. For that reason we ask the community to rally around Joshua in his struggle for refugee status.

Take a moment to read further and to see what you can do. As events are organized we ask that you support them by coming out. Perhaps you are willing to organize an event in your community, school, workplace or place of worship.

**My name is Joshua Key.** I was born and raised, a proud American, on my grandfather's 40 acre farm outside of Guthrie, Oklahoma. By the time I was 23 I was married with three young sons. I joined the U.S. army and shipped off to Iraq in 2003. Pleased with my choice and honoured by friends and family, I faced an unknown desert and unknown enemy.

My job was to raid homes and patrol streets, and while carrying out my duties I witnessed and participated in many senseless acts of violence and aggression against Iraqi civilians. One such incident included a night on the banks of the Euphrates River when my unit was called to the scene of a firefight. When we arrived and I approached I saw soldiers, my fellow American soldiers, kicking around decapitated heads like soccer balls. I never once in my time at war saw the face of the unknown enemies, just the faces of my brothers in arms change, for the worse.

While on leave in 2004, I along with my wife and four children, made my escape to Canada.

After over 10 years in yet another foreign land, I am still fighting a war. A war against my post-traumatic stress disorder, a conflict against my contract with the military, and a battle with the Canadian government. In the years since the now all too familiar desert, I lost the things that I held most dear. I lost my home; I will never again see an Oklahoma sunset or touch the red dirt. I lost my blinded belief in an all knowing and all powerful America. Worst of all, I lost my first wife and four beautiful children.

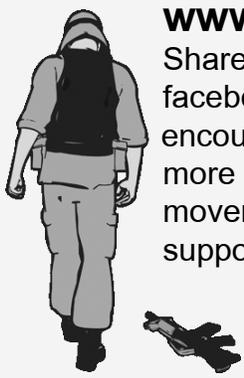
Through all the loss, I have gained. I have gained a re-birth and re-education. I have gained countless friends and an expanded family, including a Canadian wife and three, soon to be four, more fantastic children. I have also gained a new home. But, this cloud is not lined with silver, unless the Harper Government stops the deportations of American soldiers seeking sanctuary in Canada – a Canada that proudly declared that it should be “a haven from militarism”.

If I, or any of the other brave men who fought for their country, are deported from Canada we face a fate left in the hands of the U.S. military. An institution we learned, from cruel experience, that we should not trust. All I or any other of my new brothers in arms want is to stay in Canada. We want to live as Canadians. We want peace.

## HERE IS HOW YOU CAN CONTACT CHRIS ALEXANDER, THE MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP:

Hon. Chris Alexander  
Minister of Citizenship & Immigration  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario Canada  
K1A 0A6  
**Chris.Alexander@parl.gc.ca**

*Let him know that you support refugee status for Joshua Key and all war resisters.*



**www.resisters.ca**  
Share this link with your facebook friends and encourage them to find out more about the war resisters movement in Canada and to support Joshua.

Check out the Peace Alliance Winnipeg at **www.peacealliancewinnipeg.ca** for news and events being organized in the Support Joshua Key campaign in the coming months. Information will also be available at our facebook page **www.facebook.com/PeaceAllianceWinnipeg** Stay in touch with the campaign by contacting us at **info@peacealliancewinnipeg.ca**