

Press release – 18 October 2010

More than 150 international anti-NATO peace activists deprived from democratic right to protest against Lisbon NATO-summit.

The coalition of nonviolent activists based in Lisbon denounce the blocking of more than 150 European activists at the Portuguese border during these last days.

According to the Portuguese Foreigners and Borders Service, more than 168 foreign peace activists from France, Sweden, Finland and Spain are at this moment forbidden to enter Portuguese territory. They are all part of nonviolent movements like "Union of Conscientious Objectors (Finland)", "Non au M51 (France)", CIRCA (Clown Army – France), Alternativa Antimilitarista-MOC (Spain).

These activists wanted to join different events organised during the two days of the NATO summit in Lisbon, including demonstrations, nonviolent direct actions of civil disobedience, and the counter-summit.

The coalition strongly condemns the temporary suspension of the Schengen agreement, which prevents peace activists from moving freely within Europe. Benoit Calvi of the Belgian group Bombspotting states: "This is aimed at preventing people from making use of their right to freedom of expression and assembly to express their opposition to the murderous policy of NATO."

"Freedom of assembly is a basic right, fundamental to all democratic countries. It is useful to remember that NATO claims that bringing democracy is the main reason for its presence in Afghanistan. Refusing entry to peaceful demonstrators proves one more time NATO's real face: achieving its war policy by preventing public debates – in fact the opposite of democracy" ads Carlos Perez from the Spanish organisation Alternativa Antimilitarista-MOC.

The determination of the blocked activists to denounce NATO policy remains unchanged. Neither it will diminish the determination of the activists who succeeded to cross the border to stop the preparation of war plans of NATO in the coming days.

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