

PSAC 901

Stop the deportation of climate activist Zain Haq!

Zain Haq is a climate activist who lives in Vancouver, BC. He is in Canada on a student visa. He is one of the founders of Save Old Growth, a climate group that has organized and taken part in peaceful civil disobedience actions against the trans-Canada highway. Since June 2022, Zain Haq has been targeted by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) as a “national security risk.” He was detained and kept in custody by the CBSA. The Agency demanded that his release from custody be upon the condition that he would not participate in legal demonstrations or speak about civil disobedience. The CBSA did not manage to get the judge to impose those conditions.

Two months later, in August, when the climate group Save Old Growth organized a march in Vancouver along with the hereditary chiefs of Wet’suwet’en, Zain Haq checked with the VPD and was informed that his participation would not violate his release conditions. However, two weeks after the rally, during the long weekend, Zain Haq was arrested to spend eight days in prison. Right after that, the CBSA arrested him again and he was kept in detention for four more days. Acting as both the prosecutor and the police, the CBSA asked the judge to give an order for indefinite detention and a ban from all political activism. Their demand was denied. However, they have removed Zain’s work and study permit, and now he is being asked to leave the country. Zain Haq is currently going through the court process due to his arrests for climate activism. His hearing is on February 9, 2023. His future is now in the hands of the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees, Sean Fraser.

As an academic-sector labor union whose membership includes a lot of international academic workers who are neither citizens nor permanent residents in Canada, we find the treatment Zain Haq has received from the CBSA and the VPD unjust and condemnable. While the oil and gas companies and the banks that finance them walk free, the criminal law system in Canada chooses to punish the dissent of those like Zain Haq, who is fiercely fighting against the devastating impact of climate emergencies alongside the Indigenous people. We know that all these punitive measures against Zain Haq, such as depriving him of his right to study, work, freely express his dissenting opinions and join the protests, is an attack on all of us. Through the Social Justice Committee, Political Action Committee and Climate Action Group we have built over the years, we have encouraged our members, regardless of their status as citizens or non-citizens, to be an active part of the struggle for a just transition and a just recovery. Therefore, preventing Zain Haq’s deportation and demanding his charter rights be regranted immediately means securing a safe political space for all international students and those in Canada with precarious status.

We express our heartfelt solidarity with Zain Haq and call all the labor organizations to be vocal against this injustice. Our members can find information about how they can support Zain Haq – through [petition](#), [contributing to his legal fees](#) or contacting their MP.

Don’t let them deport Zain Haq!
Justice for Zain!