



"No one should die before we make changes." Harvesting Freedom campaign shows solidarity with local migrant farm workers in Brantford, Ontario.

Who: Justicia for Migrant Workers Harvesting Freedom campaign

What: Solidarity vigil to call for better housing for migrant workers

Where: Site of bunkhouse that burnt down near Oakland Ontario.
607 or 613, Burtch Road, Mt. Pleasant, Brant ON.

When: September 13th at 6:30pm

(Brantford) Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW) Harvesting Freedom caravan arrives in Brantford this evening to show support for local migrant workers. The caravan is being organized to call for permanent immigration status for migrant farm workers. In Brantford the caravan is supporting the call for decent housing for migrant workers by adopting the rallying cry 'No one should die before we make changes'. J4MW is organizing a solidarity vigil to demand decent housing for migrant farm workers.

On July 30th, a bunkhouse burnt to the ground destroying the belongings of 32 migrant farm workers from Jamaica. Luckily no one was hurt or died in as a result of the fire. J4MW is calling for changes to migrant worker housing including inclusion under the Residential Tenancies Act, snap inspections for all bunkhouse and fines and penalties to employers who refuse to improve housing for migrant workers.

"For fifty years migrant farm workers have been working in Canada under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers program and for 50 years housing conditions have remained the same", says Vasanthi Venkatesh, organizer for J4MW.

J4MW has documented numerous cases of bed bug infestation, lack of drinking water, poor water supply, cramped housing with no privacy, lack of washroom facilities, dangerous electrical connections, structural hazards, lack of sanitation, rodent infestation, exposure to mold, and mildew and toxicants. In addition, lack of laundry facilities makes workers live under constant toxic exposure as they are unable to clean the pesticides and other agricultural chemicals from their clothes and bodies. They have no space for storage of personal belongings, live in proximity to flammable material, inadequate lighting and ventilation, and so on. The list of

deplorable housing conditions is endless. Despite this, there are no regular inspections of migrant farm workers' housing, no legally enforceable living standards, and no procedure for the workers to complain about their conditions without fear of reprisal (such as the possibility of making anonymous complaints).

We must end this agricultural migrant workers exceptionalism in Canada where they are denied even the basic human right to adequate shelter and housing.

Justicia for Migrant Workers has also provided support for migrant workers impacted by this fire by fundraising over \$21,000 and organizing a successful community campaign to urge the Jamaican consulate to waive the \$173 passport fees to replace documents lost in the fire.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Gabriel Allahdua

T: 437-345-6061

Chris Ramsaroop

T: 647 834 4932

E: harvestingfreedomcampaign@gmail.com

W: www.harvestingfreedom.org

Justice for Migrant Workers

Harvesting Freedom Campaign 2016

50 years of farmworker resistance

A: 720 Spadina Avenue, Suite 223,
Toronto, ON M5S 2T9

F: [facebook.com/justice4mw/](https://www.facebook.com/justice4mw/)

T: twitter.com/j4mw