

Search for Your Rights

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Raided for no reason

Search For Your Rights is appalled by the story of Emma, a twenty year old university student who was arrested and then served an exclusion notice that prevents her from attending university.

“Since the CHOGM Special Regulations have been in place we have seen how these powers are arbitrary, unhelpful and open to abuse. Now we see the disgusting abuse of these powers for the intimidation of peaceful protestors” said Search For Your Rights’ spokesperson Pearl Lim.

“Emma was at her partner’s family home when seven policemen arrived at 7am, arrested her, and proceeded to search the house. The police insinuated that they had been surveying Emma and had purposefully arrived when they knew that the owners of the house were away, by asking how the holiday of her partner’s parents was going” said Ms Lim.

“They said that they didn’t need a warrant, because the offence I was going to be charged with was so serious they just didn’t need one” said Emma. “They took photos of each page of my diary, took all the cards out of my wallet, and were asking about the CHOGM Action Network.”

“They told me that I was under arrest for ‘criminal damage’- for spraypainting the word ‘protest’ on lawn on Barrack St. They told me that the only process they needed to follow was getting a phonecall from a senior officer” said Emma.

“When I tried to ring for advice, they took my phone. When my partner tried to ring for advice, they took his phone and made him stand outside in the road until they had finished the search and taken me to the police station.”

After six hours in custody, Emma was released without charge. She has since been served with an Exclusion Notice. Emma has never been involved in a violent protest, nor has any previous charges.

“I can’t get to uni because all of the buses go through the exclusion zones” said Emma. “I do a double degree and exam period is coming up; I need to get to uni.”

“Whatever process there has been seems to have been thrown out the window with these Special Regulations” said Ms Lim.

“We saw in the raids on homes of other CHOGM Action Network members a fortnight ago that no charges were laid, and that all police are interested in is protest material.”

“This material is all available on the CHOGM Protest website. The police could have solved themselves a lot of trouble.”

“We have no choice but to come to the conclusion that these police actions, and the Exclusion Notices, are entirely arbitrary and purely for intimidatory purposes” said Ms Lim.

“There has been no justification given for these heavy handed, totalitarian actions. One has to wonder- who is on the secret list in the Commissioner’s desk drawer? We can expect the Premier to come out claiming that CHOGM was a total success and that the laws worked. But these regulations do not increase safety.”

“These regulations do nothing other than to enable the intimidation of peaceful citizens.”

“Emma does not know why she has been targeted – and neither do we, or you, or anyone other than the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, and the Police Minister.”

Emma will still attend the approved protest today- for as long as it is outside of exclusion zones.

“So many people are cut out of the decision making process, and this is the only way they can make their voices heard” Emma said. “I am absolutely dedicated to the right to peaceful protest.”

“These police actions are frightening, but they give another reason to exercise your right to protest.”

A more detailed account of Emma’s story can be heard at <http://searchforyourrights.org/news/raided-for-no-reason/>

Search For Your Rights is in no way affiliated with the CHOGM Action Network or any other protest group.

Search for Your Rights is a non-partisan community group of over 2,400 members, initially formed to oppose the Barnett government’s stop and search laws. The group recently resolved to expand its platform to oppose further aspects of the Barnett Government’s extreme law and order agenda.

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