

# Stop Murder Music (Canada)

Working Group of the Canadian Caribbean Human Rights Group  
(CCHRG)

September 10, 2007

Akim Adé Larcher



cchrg@rogers.com

The Hon. Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1L1  
Sent Via Fax: (613) 996-9749 (613) 952-5533  
Sent Via E-mail: [Minister@cic.gc.ca](mailto:Minister@cic.gc.ca)

Dear Minister,

## **Re: Elephant Man's Let's Get Physical Canadian Tour**

We, the coalition for the Stop Murder Music (Canada) campaign a Working Group of the Canadian Caribbean Human Rights Group, together with the undersigned organizations, wish to express our solidarity with all African and Caribbean lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, who continue to struggle for an environment free from violence, fear and discrimination.

We write to you collectively in reference to the upcoming "Let's Get Physical Canadian Tour" by Jamaican dancehall artist O'Neil Bryan, aka Elephant Man. We call upon Citizenship and Immigration Canada to deny him entry to Canada.

Our concerns lie in the fact that Elephant Man has openly advocated, encouraged and glorified the violence and murder of gays and lesbians in his music.<sup>1</sup> Elephant Man has recorded dancehall tracks that include lyrics such as: "Battyman fi dead! Tek dem by surprise"<sup>2</sup> and "Log on and step pon chi chi man",<sup>3</sup> which are typical of the exhortations to kill and maim lesbians and gay men in many popular dancehall songs.<sup>4</sup> According to recent investigations by groups such as Amnesty

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<sup>1</sup> See attached lyrics document.

<sup>2</sup> Queers must be killed! Take them by surprise (English translation).

<sup>3</sup> Log on is a type of dance using the right foot in a stepping motion as if it to squash a cockroach- the lyrics boast about crushing queers (English translation).

<sup>4</sup> See Human Rights Watch, Vol. 16 No.6 (B).

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International, Human Rights Watch and community groups working on the front-lines in the Caribbean; dancehall hate propaganda fuels and reinforces anti-gay hatred and has directly coincided with the increase in hate crimes against gay men in Jamaica. To date Elephant Man has remained unapologetic for his incitement of violence and murder against gays and lesbians, and continues to profit from the royalties of his anti-gay tracks.

This incitement of violence and murder offends Canadian law and values. In particular, we would like to highlight Sections 318 and 319 of the *Criminal Code* which make it a criminal offence to advocate killing members of a group based on their sexual orientation or to publicly incite or promote hatred based on a person's sexual orientation. In addition, Section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* prohibits communication of messages that are likely to expose a person to hatred on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Because Elephant Man has become a symbol of pro-gay hatred in Jamaica and elsewhere, his presence in Canada can be perceived as a license to incite violence. In the past, Canada has denied entry visas to individuals who promote racist violence and other forms of hatred. Canada now has the power and duty to forbid the entry of those who incite hatred and open violence against people based on their sexual orientation. Canada can and must be an international leader in the fight against social injustice by condemning hate and violence in this "murder music".

We, the coalition for the Stop Murder Music (Canada) campaign, value freedom of expression, but this right does not include speech that incites hatred and murderous violence against a person based on his or her sexual orientation. The federal and provincial government has a legal obligation to protect the rights of its citizens, especially those who remain vulnerable to stigma, fear, discrimination and hate.

Artists like Elephant Man continue to perpetuate the stereotypes that promote homophobia and discrimination in the African and Caribbean diaspora, which not only encourages anti-gay/lesbian violence, but also directly hampers the fight against HIV/AIDS in these communities. A recent report by the African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO) identified deep-rooted homophobia in Caribbean culture, which translates into the belief that HIV is a "gay disease", as a major barrier to addressing HIV with Caribbean diaspora communities.<sup>5</sup> Allowing an artist such as Elephant Man to enter Canada

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.accho.ca/pdf/hiv\\_stigma\\_report.pdf](http://www.accho.ca/pdf/hiv_stigma_report.pdf)

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undermines the hard work of groups such as ACCHO, the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black Cap) and the numerous other AIDS service organizations in Canada fighting the rise in HIV infection within the African and Caribbean diaspora in Canada.

We, the coalition for the Stop Murder Music (Canada) campaign, also call on the Canada Border Services Agency to ban the import of products by Elephant Man, and other similar homophobic and anti-gay artists that contain "murder music". The legal dissemination of murder music by third-party distributors creates an unacceptable loophole in the application of our *Criminal Code* and custom regulations. We have separately asked that Canadian record retailers, distributors, sponsors, promoters, broadcasters, and other telecommunication companies comply with Canadian laws and regulations against hate by ceasing all support and promotion of "murder music" on Canadian airwaves, retail stores, venues and Canadian-controlled internet web sites.

We urge you to act immediately to deny the entry of Elephant Man. As a sign of solidarity with our cause to fight all forms of hate and discrimination, we urge the Canadian government to stand strong on this very important issue.

We collectively thank you for your leadership and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

**African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO)**

Diana Wiwa  
Administrative Coordinator

**African Canadian Social Development Council**

Raymond G. Micah  
Executive Director

**Africans in Partnership Against AIDS (APAA)**

Fanta Ongoiba  
Executive Director

**AIDS 2006 Toronto Local Host  
XVI International AIDS Conference**

Darryl Perry  
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer

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## **AIDS Committee of Durham**

Peter Richtig  
Executive Director

## **AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)**

Lori Lucier  
Executive Director

## **Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)**

Firdaus Ali  
Executive Director

## **Amnesty International LGBT (Canada)**

Alfonso Perez  
Treasurer

## **Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)**

Shannon Ryan  
Executive Director

## **Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network**

Richard Elliott  
Executive Director

## **Center for Research-Action on Race Relations (CRARR)**

Fo Niemi  
Executive Director

## **Egale Canada**

Helen Kennedy  
Executive Director

## **Gay and Lesbian Asians of Montreal (GLAM)**

Alan Wong  
Coordinator

## **Gays and Lesbian of African Descent**

Lydia Makoroka  
Core Team Leader

## **Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG)**

Gareth Williams  
Programs Director

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## **LEGALE McGill OutLaw**

Eric Boschetti  
Executive Coordinator

## **Peel HIV/AIDS Network**

Erica Opoku  
African Diaspora Capacity Building and Health Promotion Coordinator

## **POZPLANET.COM**

John Richard Allan  
Creative Director

## **Prisoners' HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN)**

Trevor Gray  
Youth Outreach Coordinator

## **OutRage!**

Peter Tatchell  
Human Rights Campaigner, London UK

cc: *The Right Hon. Robert Douglas Nicholson*  
*The Right Hon. Stockwell Day, P.C., M.P*  
*Chief of Police William Blair*

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## Dancehall Songs Referred to in the Letter<sup>6</sup>

**Album:** Reggae Hits Vol. 24<sup>7</sup>  
**Track:** A Nuh Fi Wi Fault  
**Artist:** Various Artists  
**Release Date:** 13 Nov 1998  
**Label:** Jetstar

Battyman fi dead!  
*Queers must be killed!*  
Please mark we word  
*Please mark my words*  
Gimme tha tec-nine  
*Give me the Tec-9*  
*[Tec-9: semi-automatic assault pistol]*  
Shoot dem like bird  
*Shoot them [queers] like birds*

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**Album:** Face Off<sup>8</sup>  
**Track:** We Nuh Like Gay  
**Artist:** Various Artists  
**Release Date:** 20 Nov 1999  
**Label:** V.P Records

Battyman fi dead! Tek dem by surprise  
*Queers must be killed! Take them by surprise*  
Get a shot inna yu head, inna mi big gun collide.  
*I am going to shoot you in the head, you are going to meet up with my big gun*  
Gimme me Tec-9 General B, wid de chrome wah a shine  
*Give me the Tec-9 General B, the one with the chrome that shines*  
*[Tec-9: semi-automatic assault pistol]*  
*[General B: a music colleague of Elephant Man's]*  
Harry Toddler shot out ah bugger-man  
*Harry Toddler: shoot all queer men*  
*[Harry Toddler: a music colleague of Elephant Man's]*

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<sup>6</sup> The translations of the Reggae/Dancehall tracks listed in the OutRage!/Stop Murder Music dossier were done in Jamaica by a Jamaican patois speaker, who is also a professional translator; and some of them were also independently corroborated by translators appointed by the Metropolitan Police in London, UK. None of the singers, managers or promoters has ever denied the translation of the lyrics.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.petertatchell.net/popmusic/Dancehall-Dossier-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.petertatchell.net/popmusic/Dancehall-Dossier-FINAL.pdf>

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**Album:** Log On<sup>9</sup>  
**Track:** Log On  
**Artist:** Elephant Man  
**Release Date:** Greensleeves

Log on and step pon chi chi man

*Log on and step on a queer man*

*[Log on is a type of dance using the right foot in a stepping motion as if to squash a cockroach - the lyrics boast about crushing queers.]*

Dance wi a dance and a bun out a freaky man.

*Join our dance and let's burn out the queer man*

Step pon him like a old cloth

*Step on him like an old cloth*

A dance wi a dance and a crush out a bingi man .

*Join our dance and let's crush queer men*

Do di walk, mek mi see the light and di torch dem fast

*Do the walk, quickly let me see the lighter and torch*

*[Lighter and torch: makeshift aerosol flamethrower weapon]*

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<sup>9</sup> See Human Rights Watch, Vol. 16 No.6 (B).