

Québec: Montreal police raid home of MNA Amir Khadir, arrest his daughter

Thursday 7 June 2012, by [ANNIS Roger](#) (Date first published: 7 June 2012).

Thursday, June 7, 2012—According to reports in *La Presse* and on Radio Canada, at 6 am this morning, Montreal police arrived at the home of Quebec MNA Amir Khadir and his wife, Nima Machouf, with arrest and search warrants. They arrested the couple's daughter, Yalda Machouf-Khadir, and her partner, Xavier Beauchamp. The two are among 11 student activists arrested in early morning police raids in the city.

The newspaper and Radio Canada's television cameras just happened to be on hand to witness the police raid and capture visual images of Yalda Machouf-Khadir being led away in handcuffs. (A second-hand, English language report of the arrests is published here in the Montreal daily *The Gazette*.)

Following the arrests, police proceeded to search the Khadir home. According to *La Presse*, an angry Nima Machouf shouted at police, "I am going to watch you and make sure you do not ransack my home or humiliate my family and this neighbourhood."

Yalda Machouf-Khadir is a student at CEGEP (junior college) Vieux Montreal and has been arrested twice on non-criminal accusations since the beginning of the student strike. According to her mother, the warrant for the arrest of her and Xavier Beauchamp pertains to alleged defacing of the constituency office of former Minister of Education Line Beauchamp. The accusations this time are under terms of the Criminal Code.

Two lawyers for Yalda Machouf-Khadir told *La Presse* they are perplexed by the police operation. "It's clear that this police operation was directed from above. Why arrest these young people at the very moment that the Grand Prix is about to run and demonstrations have been announced? To dissuade demonstrators? Or provoke them?

"Next week, the chief justice (of the Supreme Court of Quebec) will hear an application contesting Bill 78 and Montreal regulation P-6 (which makes the wearing of a mask at a public event declared by police to be "illegal" to be a criminal act-RA) in the case of Anarchopanda (an individual who dresses as a panda bear and attends student marches-RA). If there is trouble during the weekend, that could give further arguments on the government's and city's side. So it is strange timing."

Several groups have announced demonstrations to take place directly at the site of the Montreal Grand Prix this weekend, including the anarchist group 'Anti-Capitalist Convergence.' Another group, in what is possibly some comic relief, has submitted the itinerary of its desired march to police, in conformity with Bill 78. The requested locale is on the Gilles Villeneuve Racetrack where the Grand Prix will run!

Roger Annis, June 7, 2012

* <http://www.rogerannis.com/police-search-home-of-family-of-mna-amir-khadir-arrest-his-daughter/>

Arrested at protest, Quebec political leader says he is 'Proud to stand with my people'

Amir Khadir and 66 others handcuffed at peaceful protest in solidarity with students.

The following article was first published on the web magazine Rabble.ca.

June 6, 2012—An elected member of Quebec's National Assembly was among 67 people arrested last night in Quebec City at a protest march against the Quebec government's proposed 75 percent hike to post-secondary tuition fees and the civil liberties-crushing Bill 78.

Amir Khadir is the one elected member of the Québec solidaire party. He represents the Montreal district of Mercier. He and 66 others were arrested for marching in a roadway. They were handcuffed, detained for several hours in a transit bus used as a jail cell, and then issued a fine of \$494.

At a press conference this morning in Quebec City, Khadir came out swinging against the government and its draconian law. He denounced Bill 78 and hailed those who are defying it through acts of civil disobedience. "I am proud of my people" for standing up to the law, he said.

He called the government of Premier Jean Charest "corrupt and illegitimate" and said it was "an honour" to stand with protesters in opposition to it.

Selective use of Bill 78

The march organizers did not seek approval from police eight hours or more in advance, as required by Bill 78. The police declared the march "illegal" under Bill 78 before it stepped into the street. Twenty minutes later, a riot squad of the Quebec City police kettled the marchers and commenced the arrests.

The demonstrators were charged under section 500.1 of Quebec's highway traffic act. Its purported aim is to protect the personal safety of road users. Police agencies across the province are using Bill 78 to declare protests "illegal." But to avoid provoking further opposition to it, they are charging people with infractions of municipal or highways regulations.

It's also likely that police and government officials are worried that the court challenges initiated against Bill 78 will be a huge embarrassment and legal imbroglio should they eventually prevail. No doubt, the laying of charges under the law at a later stage with the aid of video and other evidence being gathered today is being kept as an option.

Bill 78 was approved by the Liberal Party majority in the National Assembly (provincial parliament) on May 18. It aims to cripple the strike of tens of thousands of post-secondary students that has rocked Quebec for four months.

The law has outraged civil libertarians and large sections of the Quebec population. A large protest movement has sprung up across the province, including local, grassroots movements that use pots and pans on protest marches and community gatherings to signal opposition to the right wing, pro-

capitalist policies of the Liberal Party government in Quebec City and, to some degree, its Conservative Party counterpart in Ottawa.

The law is also stirring concern right across Canada.

Handcuffed for a traffic violation

Khadir told the press conference today that as he was leaving the National Assembly at 8:30 pm the previous evening, he noticed the protest action nearby and joined it. The arrests of peaceful marchers were “deplorable” and “humiliating.”

He contrasted the treatment of protesters with that of ministers of the Liberal Party government who for years have received money and favours from the “Mafioso” that run Quebec’s construction industry, and delivered their own favours in return.

“We have allowed one percent of the population to take control of society and our democratic institutions. It’s time this stopped.”

An unjust Bill 78 was imposed to “force onto the 99 percent the privileges of the one percent.”

Last year, Premiere Jean Charest was obliged to convene a special inquiry into corruption and criminality prevailing in the province’s construction industry. The corruption pervades relations to successive provincial governments and governing parties. The inquiry began public hearings last month and they will continue through the rest of the year.

Quebec’s new Minister of Education, Michelle Courchesne, is engulfed in her own controversies following the release of two reports this year by the province’s auditor general. The most recent report cites irregularities and possible criminal violations in the awarding of construction and other contracts for sporting facilities during her previous tenure as Minister of Education, Sport and Recreation from 2007-2010. The other criticizes the quality of many of 18,000 new daycare spaces whose funding was awarded by her in 2008 while she was also Minister of Families and Elders.

In addition to her current responsibility as Minister of Education of Quebec, she is the President of the Treasury Board and Deputy Premier.

At the press conference today, Khadir cited the protest of 400,000 people in the streets of Montreal on May 22 as “a massive display of civil disobedience” that included scientists, lawyers, elected politicians and people from all other walks of life.

“I am accompanying my people. I am doing what Martin Luther King did in his time,” he told the press conference. “He is my model.”

At the press conference, journalists peppered Khadir with hostile questions, asking why he did not withdraw from the march last night once he learned it was declared “illegal.” He replied that it is “a matter of honour to stand up to a law imposed by a corrupt government.” He criticized other members of the National Assembly who have withdrawn from student protests out of deference to Bill 78.

He later told Radio Canada, “Hundreds of thousands of people from across Quebec are disobeying this law.” When challenged by the program host if he had the duty as an MNA to uphold “the law,” he reiterated, “One has a moral duty to not obey unjust laws.” He cited a string of examples from other countries of elected politicians being arrested for taking principled stands on social or human rights issues.

The leader of the official opposition party in the National Assembly, Pauline Marois of the Parti québécois, stated today that Bill 78 should be respected. Marches declared to be “illegal” by police should disperse, she said. She and the other MNAs of her party have been wearing the red square symbol of support to the student struggle.

The co-leader of Québec solidaire, Françoise David, issued a statement today on behalf of the party denouncing the arrests in Quebec City. The statement says there is a double standard in the application of the law in Quebec. While businesses ignore with impunity the laws governing lobbying and French-language public signage, “Police go after people protesting against an unjust and arbitrary law and arrest them. The people of Quebec have every reason to be alarmed about these two standards of justice and must continue to express their disapproval.”

Amir Khadir’s daughter has twice been arrested while taking part in student protests in Montreal. In reporting her father’s arrest on Radio Canada television news last night, the news host asked a correspondent on the scene the precise charge against Khadir and other protesters. She then laughed in commenting, “Handcuffed for a traffic violation? One doesn’t see that very often!”

Roger Annis, June 6, 2012

Here is a recent interview by Stefan Christoff with Quebec solidaire MNA Amir Khadir on the student strike in Quebec:

<http://rabble.ca/news/2012/06/quebecs-student-uprising-interview-amir-khadirmovement>.
