

Support First Lieutenant Ehren Watada **REFUSING TO KILL IS NOT A CRIME**



Lt. Watada (center) with his parents

"Normally, those in the military have allowed others to speak for them and act on their behalf. That time has come to an end... I hope that my example shows other soldiers that they too have the power to choose right over wrong and that freedom is something that can never be taken away". **Lt. Watada**

On Thursday June 22, First Lieutenant Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer of the US Army to publicly refuse to go to Iraq and to campaign for an end to this war, was confined to his base and put under a complete gag order without being charged. We urge you to support his principled and courageous stand, to demand that he be freed to move and to communicate with his family and supporters and the public, and that he not face any further punishment for his actions.

We invite you to take part in a Day of Action on Tuesday June 27 in support of Lt. Watada.

The Day of Action has been called by the US group Courage to Resist and actions have been planned across the US, including one in Philadelphia organized by *Payday*. The Watada family is pleased and excited that *Payday* will internationalize the support by calling for groups and individuals in other countries to take action with them. If you live outside the US, you may want to contact the US Embassy wherever you are, maybe even vigiling in front. A model letter is suggested on reverse.

Recently, US soldier **Suzanne Swift** was arrested for deserting her military police unit after suffering post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of rape and sexual harassment by superiors while on duty in Iraq. Her refusal and Lt. Watada's stand out among the increasing number of soldiers who are refusing the atrocities this war is inflicting on civilians and its own military. The two families have met and gave mutual support. More information on Suzanne Swift's campaign will be available soon at www.suzanneswift.org or email Sara Rich, Suzanne Swift's mother, at formydaughtersuzanne@yahoo.com.

"We taught Ehren that he has to care for other human beings, other people on this planet, regardless of where they are. We didn't teach him to go kill children, kill women in Iraq... he's chosen the hard course, but it's the right course and we're very proud of him."

Bob Watada, Lt. Watada's father, who refused to serve in the Vietnam war.

"I think that what Ehren is doing will galvanize the antiwar movement... The 1% of the population that represent the oil conglomerates, and the rich who get richer, can no longer mandate and determine our future."

Carolyn Ho, Lt. Watada's mother.

In defending Lt. Watada, we are defending ourselves and our sisters and brothers in every country against the rape, murder and devastation unleashed by Bush's "endless wars" and the theft of billions of dollars from every population which the world needs to be invested in caring not killing.

Power to the sisters and brothers refusing to kill – and to be killed

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Take action on Tuesday June 27.** A current list of demonstrations can be found on the Courage to Resist website <http://www.couragetoresist.org/x/content/view/96/27/>.
 - **If you live outside the US,** send a letter of protest to, or vigil outside of, the US embassy where you live. See reverse for model letter, or write your own. For US embassies and consulates see <http://usembassy.state.gov>. Please cc: courage@riseup.net and payday@paydaynet.org
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Family and Friends of Lt. Watada: www.thankyoult.org Courage to Resist: www.couragetoresist.org

Payday is a network of men working with the *Global Women's Strike*
INVEST IN CARING NOT KILLING website www.refusingtokill.net email: payday@paydaynet.org
Philadelphia (215) 848 1120 London 0207 209 4751

Model letter to US Embassies

Dear Ambassador,

Re: Lt. Ehren Watada, confined to base and silenced for refusing to deploy to Iraq

On June 7, First Lieutenant Ehren Watada of the US Army publicly declared that he is refusing orders to deploy to Iraq with his brigade, after the Army had declined his resignation based on his conscience and principles.

We understand that on 22 June, he was confined to Fort Lewis and put under a complete gag order without any charge or proper process, after refusing orders to prepare to fly to Iraq. We demand that he be freed from confinement and allowed to communicate with his family and supporters and the public, that he be granted an honorable discharge, and that he not face court-martial or is not in any way punished for his actions. Refusing to kill is not a crime.

Lt. Watada's stance is in line with the Nuremberg Charter (1950), which enshrined in international law the responsibility of each of us to refuse to obey illegal and immoral orders from any government. In the US, these principles have been part of the official policy of the Department of Defense since 1953, and can be found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice 809.ART.90 (20), 892.ART.92 (1), and 892.ART.92 (2).

The pre-emptive war on, and occupation of, Iraq is a crime on a massive scale. Increasingly, soldiers in the US, the UK and other countries are refusing to participate in this slaughter, torture and rape -- by some estimates over 100,000 Iraqis killed, the majority women and children. The number of US military deaths in Iraq is now over 2500. Total casualties for both are many times higher.

US soldier Suzanne Swift was arrested for deserting after suffering post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of rape and sexual harassment by superiors while on duty in Iraq. Her refusal and Lt. Watada's represents the view of millions. Poll after poll around the world, including in the US, have shown public rejection of the war and the occupation of Iraq.

At least 8,000 US soldiers are officially "deserters", hundreds are seeking refuge in Canada and other countries, and the number of young men and women signing up for the military (particularly people of color) is at an historic low despite the pressure of the "poverty draft". In the UK, which has the second largest contingent in Iraq, the number of deserters has tripled since the invasion.

Ben Griffin, a British soldier who resigned from the SAS (Special Armed Services) said,
"Soldiers are no longer asked to line up in the trench and at a blow of their commander's whistle go over the top without thinking. The war is illegal, we were lied to -- surely a soldier is allowed to unvolunteer himself from the army?"

Lt. Watada has said of his decision to refuse,
"It is my conclusion as an officer of the Armed Forces that the war in Iraq is not only morally wrong but a horrible breach of American law. Although I have tried to resign out of protest, I am forced to participate in a war that is manifestly illegal. As the order to take part in an illegal act is ultimately unlawful as well, I must as an officer of honor and integrity refuse that order."

We urge you to accept Lt. Watada's refusal to deploy to Iraq and grant him an immediate honorable discharge, and to release him from confinement and the gag order immediately.

Yours sincerely,
