



February 26, 2024

To: The Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development

Re: Mining Companies Operating Outside Canada

Dear Minister. Ng:

The National Council of Women of Canada believes that mining companies registered in Canada should be required to follow the same social and environmental standards in their operations outside Canada as are obligatory within Canada.

In September 2023, the House of Commons' Standing Committee on International Trade undertook a study of environmental and human rights considerations regarding Canadian mining firms abroad. In 2021 there were 750 Canadian mining and mineral exploration companies operating overseas, mostly in countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia-Pacific. Several environmental and justice organizations taking part in the study, drew attention to the negative effects of some Canadian mining and mineral exploration firms on the natural environment with increased levels of contamination and pollution, including hazardous substances and toxic spills. There have been instances of mining tailings contaminating drinking water; spills of cyanide, mercury and arsenic; and building a mine in the Amazon rainforest. The environmental degradation can last many years impacting the health and well-being of local communities. Mining operations tend to occur near indigenous territories indicating environmental racism.

Canadian mining companies are linked to serious human rights violations such as bodily harm, deaths and gang rape, linked to security personal at the mines. Human rights defenders face threats, kidnappings and assassinations. There have been forced evictions with burning of their houses and no compensation for the losses. Local people are forced into slave labour. There are also abuses of Indigenous rights, and negative economic impacts at local and national levels.

The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability asserts that "Canada does not have adequate measures to prevent these harms from occurring or to help ensure that victims can access remedy and hold companies to account." The Justice and Corporate Accountability Project states that "a growing body of research demonstrates that

embassy staff, Trade Commissioners, and senior government officials often continue to support and defend Canadian resource companies amid strong community opposition, significant levels of violence and criminalization, and credible evidence of environmental contamination.”

Canadians expect Canadian mining companies operating overseas to conform with human rights standards and conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. We urge you to ensure that the Government takes actions to make this happen.

Sincerely,

Marianne Wilkinson
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