



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne
Minister for International Trade
Francois-Philippe.Champagne@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister:

I am writing to express my support for the creation of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Business Enterprise.

When visiting international church partners, I have heard terrible stories of human rights violations in the name of resource extraction. It is my understanding that the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Business Enterprise will investigate complaints concerning Canadian companies operating overseas and findings will be made public. It is my hope that the Ombudsperson will be fully independent from business and government, and have sufficient authority to effectively investigate allegations of human rights abuse.

For years, KAIROS and its international partners have called on Canada to hold its mining companies accountable for charges of violations that include contaminated water supplies, dispossession, intimidation, beatings, rapes, and murder from company security forces and military personal. In 2013, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada committed together to promoting responsible resource extraction. At home and abroad, Canadian companies are major players in the mining industry; Canada should be a leader in corporate accountability in the extractive sector. Central to this accountability is respect for the right of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent and respect for care of the environment.

While we like to think of ourselves as “good” people, we are not always so good at admitting when policies and practices fail. An independent human rights Ombudsperson, with the ability to independently investigate allegations concerning the overseas operations of Canadian companies, is an important step toward respect, accountability and justice. The presence of an Ombudsperson reminds us all to work for human rights and to care for creation everyday.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

cc Dean Allison, MP, Official Opposition Critic for International Trade
Tracey Ramsey, MP, NDP Critic for Trade
Paul Manly, Green Party Critic for International Trade
Gabriel Ste-Marie, MP, Bloc Québécois, dossier du Commerce international
ELCIC National Church Council