

LOOK BEFORE LEAPING: CANADA-CENTRAL AMERICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED

Canada is quietly on the verge of re-starting the last phase of negotiations for yet another free trade agreement. This one is known as the Canada-Central America Four Free Trade Agreement (CA4FTA), in reference to its negotiating partners – Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Canada already has a similar agreement with Costa Rica, which is built on the model of the problematic North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Canada's eagerness to replicate this 'free trade' model is questionable given what is known about its impact, particularly on developing nations.

NAFTA has not delivered its promised benefits to the Mexican people. The facts are troubling: 1.5 million campesino farmers have lost their livelihoods, wages remain low, union organizing is suppressed, and, as has been the case in Canada, the government has had to pay millions of dollars in "compensation" to businesses whose operations were deemed to be affected by environmental or health protection measures. Even when Canada wins it loses. Such was the recent tribunal process that ruled in Canada's favour over softwood lumber. NAFTA's strongest economic partner, the U.S., simply ignored the tribunal's ruling.

Central Americans have witnessed these results and have had time to analyze the consequences of such agreements on their economies. As a result, during the year-long battle to ratify the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) with the United States, tens of thousands of Central Americans took to the streets to oppose their governments' intent to sign. In response, some governments used repressive measures to quell public protest and ensure ratification.

In a context of acute poverty and inequity, communities across Central America struggle with corporate exploitation of natural resources, and explosive land conflicts. Central America still has highly militarized societies, human rights abuses are rampant and impunity, not justice, is the norm.

The proposed CA4FTA will bring a new layer of binding regulations to the region's governments, and powerful new rights for corporate investors—without any corresponding responsibilities to respond to community concerns or respect human rights standards. But there is no way of knowing the details of the trade agreement, as the Canadian government has refused to release the draft text for public examination and discussion.

Given the wide popular opposition to the 'free trade' model in both the U.S. and Central America, Canada should urgently re-evaluate its own trade objectives in the region. These objectives must not override its human rights obligations and commitment to locally-driven, sustainable development.

To demonstrate its commitment to transparency, civil society participation, and human rights obligations, we insist that Canada:

- Release the full text of the CA4FTA while it is still being negotiated and at least three months before the agreement is ratified, and ensure that its Central American counterparts do the same;
- Conduct an independent human rights impact assessment of the proposed agreement before proceeding with negotiations;
- Ensure Canadian public and parliamentary debate of the CA4FTA prior to Cabinet ratification.

Signed,

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Acción Medica Cristiana	Nicaragua
Alcaldía Indígena de Sololá	Guatemala
Alianza Cívica Chiapas (Colectivo de Promoción de los Derechos Civiles y Desarrollo Social, DECIDES, A.C.)	Mexico
Alianza Cívica de Nuevo León	Mexico
Alianza Cívica Querétaro	Mexico
Alianza por la Vida y la Paz	Guatemala
Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART)	United States
Amigos del Medio Ambiente de Sonsonate, AMAS	El Salvador
Asociacion de Comunidades Rurales de El Salvador	El Salvador
Asociacion de mujeres por la dignidad y la vida	El Salvador
Asociación de Mujeres Salvadoreñas Residentes en l’Outaouais, Gatineau	Canada
Asociación Latinoamericana de Micros, pequeños y medianos empresarios, A.C.	Mexico
Asociación Nacional de Empresas de Limpieza, A. C. (ANELAC)	Mexico
Asociación Q’anil San Juan Sacatepéquez	Guatemala
Asociación Salvadoreña para la Formación y Capacitación Integral Sostenible, ASAFOCAIS	El Salvador
Asociación Salvadoreña Promotora de la Salud (ASPS)	El Salvador
Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network	Canada
ATTAC – Québec	Canada
BC Central America Student Alliance	Canada
BC Teachers’ Federation	Canada
Biniguluzaa A.C.	Mexico
Bloque Popular Centroamericano	Central America
CALDH (Center for Human Rights Legal Action)	Guatemala
California Coalition for Fair Trade and Human Rights	United States
Campaign for Labor Rights, Washington, DC	United States
Canadian Auto Workers	Canada
Canadian Council for Internacional Co-operation	Canada
Canadian Friends Service Committee	Canada
Canadian Union of Postal Workers	Canada
CEFIMAC	Mexico
CEIBA	Guatemala
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)	Canada
Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), York University	Canada
Centre international de solidarité ouvrière	Canada
Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador A.C.	Mexico

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Centro de Derechos Humanos Tepeyac del Istmo de Tehuantepec, A. C.	Mexico
Centro de Estudios Sociales Economicos Ambientales y de Participación Ciudadana, A.C. (CESEPAC)	Mexico
Centro de Estudios y Apoyo Laboral, CEAL	El Salvador
Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad, CIS	El Salvador
Centro de Investigacion y Solidaridad Obrera A.C	Mexico
Centro de Investigación sobre Inversión y Comercio CEICOM	El Salvador
Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria, A.C. (CIEPAC)	Mexico
Centro de Promoción y Asesoría Comunitaria	Mexico
Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en Centro América	Guatemala
Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (CENCOS)	Mexico
Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento, A.C. – COPEVI	Mexico
Centro para la Defensa del Consumidor, CDC	El Salvador
CEP-PARRAS, A.C	Mexico
CESTA – Amigos de la tierra	El Salvador
Centro de Derechos Humanos Tepeyac del Istmo de Tehuantepec, A.C.	Mexico
Coalicion Hondureña de Accion Ciudadana	Honduras
Coalición pro Justicia en las Maquiladoras (CJM)	Mexico
Coalition québécoise contre les ateliers de misère, Montréal	Canada
COCOMI: Coordinadora Comunitaria Miravalle Asociación Civil	Mexico
CoDevelopment Canada, Vancouver	Canada
Coimite indígena de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa	Mexico
Colectiva de Mujeres Hondureñas (CODEMUH)	Honduras
Colectivo Educación para la Paz y los Derechos Humanos A.C.	Mexico
Colectivo Feminista Mercedes Olivera y Bustamante, A. C. (COFEMO)	Mexico
Comercio Justo México, A.C.	Mexico
Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala – CDHG	Guatemala
Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Valle de Tehuacán, A. C.	Mexico
Comisión de Derechos Humanos Hispano Guatemalteca	Guatemala
Comisión de Derechos Humanos y Laborales del Valle de Tehuacán	Mexico
Comité Coordinador de Comunidades, CCC	El Salvador
Comité de Análisis “Ana Silvia Olán” de Sonsonate, CANASOS	El Salvador
Comité de Análisis “Ana Silvia Olán” de Sonsonate	El Salvador
Comité de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)	Honduras
Common Frontiers	Canada
Como Colectivo Rebelión	Mexico

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Comunicacion Comunitaria A.C. y AMARC	Mexico
Concejo Civico de Organizaciones Populares e Indigenas de Honduras (COPINH)	Honduras
Confederación de Unidad Sindical de Guatemala	Guatemala
Consejo de Médicos y Parteras Indígenas Tradicionales	Mexico
Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca “Ricardo Flores Magón”, CIPO-RFM	Mexico
Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI)	Puerto Rico
Consejo Regional del Café de Coatepec, A.C.	Mexico
Consejo Regional Ecológico Cultural del Istmo (CRECI)	Mexico
Convergencia de Organismos Civiles por la Democracia	Mexico
Cooperativa Mujeres del Campo de Masaya R.I., Masaya, C.A.	Nicaragua
COPEVI	Mexico
CORDES – Fundacion para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador	El Salvador
Council of Canadians	Canada
Centro Cuernavacense Intercultural de Dialogo sobre el Desarrollo (Cuernavaca Centre for Intercultural Dialogue on Development)	Mexico
CUPE National	Canada
Desarrollo Comunitario del Nazas, A.C. (DECONAZ, A.C.)	Mexico
Desarrollo Local Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia	Mexico
DESMI (Desarrollo económico y social de los mexicanos indígenas, A.C.), San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas	Mexico
Développement et Paix / Development and Peace, Montréal	Canada
Dinamismo Juvenil	Mexico
Ecumenical Task Force for Justice in the Americas (ETFJA), British Colombia	Canada
El Centro de Derechos Humanos “Miguel Agustín Pro”	Mexico
El Centro de Estudios Sociales y Culturales Antonio de Montesinos, A.C.	Mexico
El Comité Altermundista de Cancún	Mexico
El Movimiento Alternativo de Recuperacion de Ecosistemas Afectados (MAREA AZUL) A.C.	Mexico
Emmanuel United Church	Canada
Encuentro Popular-Alianza Social Continental, Costa Rica Chapter	Costa Rica
Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial – ECAP	Guatemala
Equipo Pueblo	Mexico
Faith and Justice Committee, St. Edward the Confessor Mission, Pointe-Claire, Quebec	Canada
Fédération des femmes du Québec	Canada
FENACOOOP R.L. (Federación Nacional Agropecuaria Agroindustriales R.L), Managua	Nicaragua
FESPAD	El Salvador
FIAN (Foodfirst, Information and Action Network)	Mexico

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Foundation for Human Rights in Guatemala, Chicago	United States
Fundación Ayuda en Acción	Mexico
Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho	El Salvador
Fundación Kairós	Argentina
Global Exchange	United States
Guatemala Community Network, Toronto	Canada
Halifax Peace Coalition	Canada
Health Sciences Association of B.C.	Canada
Hemispheric Social Alliance	
Hispanic Community, Emmanuel United Church	Canada
Horizons of Friendship, Cobourg	Canada
Incede, Desarrollo y Estrategias en Comunicación, A.C.	Mexico
Indignación. Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C.	México
Institute for Policy Studies	United States
Instituto de Relaciones Económicas Internacionales	Switzerland
Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario, A.C.	Mexico
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives	Canada
AQOCI, L'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale	Canada
La Fundación Don Sergio Méndez Arceo	Mexico
Labor Rights Alliance for Global Justice	United States
Latin America Connexions, Vancouver	Canada
Latin American Canadian Solidarity Association (LACASA), London	Canada
Latin American Studies, University of British Columbia	Canada
L'Entraide missionnaire	Canada
Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre	Argentina
MadreSelva	Guatemala
Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), Toronto	Canada
Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network	Canada
MESA GLOBAL de Guatemala (Coalition of 22 organizations)	Guatemala
MiningWatch Canada	Canada
Montreal Presbytery, United Church of Canada	Canada
Movimiento Ambientalistas en Accion de El Salvador	El Salvador
Movimiento de Trabajadores Campesinos-as, Obispado de San Marcos	Guatemala
Movimiento Juvenil Nueva Generación XXI	El Salvador
Movimiento Madre Tierra, member of Friends of the Earth	Honduras
Movimiento Nacional de Derechos Humanos	Guatemala
Mujeres por México en Chihuahua, A.C.	Mexico

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)	United States
Nicaragua Network	United States
Nova Scotia Environmental Network	Canada
OIKOS Solidaridad	El Salvador
One World Global Education Programs, Kitchener	Canada
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	Canada
OPIRG (Ontario Public Interest Research Group) at the University of Ottawa	Canada
Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondurena, OFRANEH	Honduras
Organizaciones Maya Kaqchikel para el Desarrollo Equitativo y Sostenible (COMKADES)	Guatemala
Oxfam Canada	Canada
Oxfam Club at the University of Ottawa	Canada
Por la Unión de Juristas de México	Mexico
Programa de Derechos Humanos del Centro de Asesoría Laboral del Peru (CEDAL)	Peru
Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala, Montréal	Canada
Promotora de Servicios para el Desarrollo	Mexico
Proyecto UE-CISS (Cooperación Internacional Sur Sur)	Italy
Quixote Center	United States
Radio Comunitaria Indígena, Radio Huave, San Francisco del Mar	Mexico
Red de Acción Ciudadana frente al Comercio e Inversión, SINTI TECHAN	El Salvador
Red de Ambientalistas en Acción	El Salvador
Red del Suroeste por la Justicia Ambiental y Economica	Mexico
Red Nacional Género y Economía (REDGE)	Mexico
Red Social Para la Educacion Publica en America (Red SEPA)	
Red Unidos por los Derechos Humanos, A.C.	Mexico
Réseau Justice et Foi Ahuntsic, Montreal	Canada
Réseau québécois sur l'Intégration continentale	Canada
Rights Action	Canada
Roberto Lucio Olvera Saavedra, Área de Comunicación y Vínculos Solidarios, Fundación Ayuda en Acción	Mexico
Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec	Canada
Salvadoran International Citizens Network, Ottawa Chapter	Canada
Salvadoran International Citizens Network, Toronto Chapter	Canada
Salvaide, Ottawa	Canada
Secretariado Internacional Cristiano de Solidaridad "Oscar A. Romero" – SICSAL	Mexico
Secretariado Social Mexicano (SSM)	Mexico
SERCUPO al servicio de la cultura popular	Argentina

ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Servicios de Apoyo Intercultural A.C.	Mexico
Sindicato de la Industria Eléctrica de El Salvador, Seccional DELSUR, S.a. de C.V.	El Salvador
Sindicato de Trabajadores de Educacion de Guatemala (STEG)	Guatemala
Social Action Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal	Canada
Social Justice Committee, Montreal	Canada
Social Justice Group of St. John Brébeuf Parish, Lasalle	Canada
Société internationale pour le Développement	Canada
SPGQ (Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement de Québec)	Canada
Student committee DIMEIL (Students in International Development and Studies) at the University of Ottawa	Canada
Students With A Collective Conscience	Canada
Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec	Canada
The Calgary Citizens Coordinating Committee on Latin America	Canada
The Development Gap	United States
The Guatemalan Working Group of OPIRG (Ontario Public Interest Research Group) McMaster University	Canada
The National Front Against Mining (FNRM)	Guatemala
The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Anglican Church of Canada	Canada
The Social Justice Group of St. John Brébeuf Parish, La Salle	Canada
The United Church of Canada	Canada
Tiempos Nuevos Teatro, Chalatenango	El Salvador
Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña, UNES	El Salvador
Union de Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo (UCIZONI)	Mexico
Unión de Contribuyentes en General de México, A. C. (Ucgemac)	Mexico
Unión de Empresas Sociales Cooperativas del D. F.	Mexico
Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala (UNSITRAGUA)	Guatemala
United Steelworkers	Canada
US Nicaraguan Friendship Office	United States
Voices on the Border Washington, DC	United States