



Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives /
Initiatives œcuméniques
canadiennes pour
la justice

Members

The Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for
Development and Peace
Canadian Religious Conference
Christian Reformed Church in
North America (Canada Corporation)
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Canada
Mennonite Central Committee
Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
The Primate's World Relief and
Development Fund
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The United Church of Canada

Membres

Assemblée annuelle canadienne
de la Société religieuse des Amis
Comité Central Mennonite Canada
Conférence religieuse canadienne
Développement et Paix
L'Église anglicane du Canada
Église Évangélique Luthérienne
au Canada
L'Église presbytérienne au Canada
L'Église réformée chrétienne en
Amérique du Nord
(Société canadienne)
L'Église Unie du Canada
Le fonds du Primat pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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16 April 2020

The Honourable Marco Mendicino
Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
Marco.Mendicino@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Marie-Claude.Bibeau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca

Dear Ministers:

The Government of Canada's encouraging response to calls for assistance for foreign and undocumented workers during this unprecedented and uncertain time has helped alleviate a profoundly stressful situation for one of our society's most vulnerable groups.

By lowering eligibility requirements to access EI benefits, protecting the health and safety of seasonal agricultural workers by ensuring that employers provide proper housing and accommodation in compliance with public health needs for social distancing and sanitization, and implementing the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), among other measures, your government has demonstrated how much these workers contribute to Canadian society, and how critical they are to the Canadian economy and food supply.

While these inclusive and responsible steps are important and significant, KAIROS understands the need to remain vigilant and to continue to work collaboratively and collectively to ensure their implementation is effective and efficient, and does not contribute to further exclusion and marginalization of temporary foreign workers and undocumented workers.

In solidarity with migrant workers' organizations, advocates, human rights groups, and other organizations seeking justice for migrant workers, KAIROS calls on the federal government to continue treating these workers fairly and ensuring their human rights are respected. Specifically, KAIROS is asking that the government please ensure that:

- Temporary foreign workers who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 lay offs, or who have had to stop working because of illness or the need to self-isolate, will continue to have access to emergency income measures.
- Newly arrived temporary foreign workers who have not earned \$5,000, and undocumented workers who've lost their jobs, will have access to emergency income support and health benefits without threat of sanction or deportation.
- Newly arrived temporary foreign workers, including seasonal agricultural workers who are required to self-isolate, will have access to CERB or the equivalent for the self isolation period, regardless of program stream or sector.



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- Non-status workers will have access to the Federal Interim Health Program. The federal government will also work with the provinces to maintain health coverage for temporary foreign workers who lose their jobs due to COVID-19, and COVID-19 testing and all necessary treatments will be available to all workers.
- Workplaces comply with public health directives related to COVID-19, including physical distancing, self isolation, housing, and sanitization.
- Temporary foreign workers who lose their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis will not be subject to deportation but will instead be granted open work permits. Similarly, undocumented workers, especially those seeking health care, will not be pursued but instead will be encouraged to self-identify and will be granted regular status.

KAIROS will continue its education and awareness raising initiatives, and provide accompaniment to temporary foreign workers, the undocumented and refugees. Our hope is that this crisis will leave us with greater understanding and appreciation of the contributions of temporary foreign workers, from coast to coast to coast.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Henry
Executive Director