



Canadian Ecumenical  
Justice Initiatives /  
Initiatives œcuméniques  
canadiennes pour  
la justice

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December 4, 2020

The Honourable Mary Ng P.C, M.P.  
Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON

Dear Minister Ng:

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a member of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, denounces the Government of Canada's decision to renege on its 2018 promise to grant the CORE a mandate, resources, and capacity to investigate alleged human rights violations with ties to the Canadian extractive sector.

For over a decade, KAIROS, member churches, and networks have been advocating for an ombudsperson to address Global South communities' claims of Canadian corporate misconduct. We have heard from partners in Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mexico about the devastating impacts on communities and the environment when Canadian extractive companies go unchecked. And these impacts are differentiated.

*The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* leaves no doubt that the extractive sector is a leading factor in the gender-based violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people who reside near projects and/or work in that sector. As Indigenous and Afro-descendant women across Turtle Island and the planet reiterate with evidence, Canada-based extractive companies typically disregard the rights—inclusive of free, prior, and informed consent—of Indigenous communities living near extractive projects. These companies have also been accused of contributing to violence against land and water protectors who are defending the planet from climate distress.

Partners also warn of dispossession, food and water insecurity, displacement, repression, militarization, and other forms of gender-based violence in and around resource rich areas where Canadian subsidiaries, junior mining companies, and multinationals operate.

KAIROS received the news that the CORE would not be granted the power to investigate on November 25, just as the Government of Canada is undergoing a consultation process to strengthen its Feminist Foreign Policy. KAIROS upholds that without strong and unequivocal corporate accountability measures that respond to the gendered impacts of resource extraction, Canada's foreign policy will fall short of its feminist intentions.

With its refusal to grant the CORE investigatory powers, Canada has allowed economic and corporate interests to obstruct its commitment to human rights, the environment, and feminist principles.

Corporate Accountability is integral to a Feminist Foreign Policy. In our recent submission to Global Affairs Canada to the Feminist Foreign Policy, KAIROS urges the Government of Canada to:

- grant the CORE the tools to investigate allegations of business-related human rights and environmental abuses committed abroad.
- enact legislation requiring that companies—including subsidiaries and supply chains—undergo mandatory human rights due diligence.
- adopt the guidelines and recommendations of *Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders*, *Raising her Voice: Confronting the Unique Challenges Facing Women Human Rights Defenders*, and other reports advocating for the rights and well-being of Indigenous and Afro-descendant women human rights defenders throughout the world.

We continue to have these expectations from the Government of Canada, particularly from a government that seeks to have a Feminist Foreign Policy.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Henry', with a long, sweeping underline.

Jennifer Henry, Executive Director, KAIROS

Cc:

The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honourable Francois-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development  
MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe  
MP Garnett Genuis  
MP Elizabeth May  
MP Heather McPherson  
Emily Dwyer, Coordinator, CNCA