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Justice Initiatives /  
Initiatives œcuméniques  
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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

June 15, 2021

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives strongly urges the Government of Canada to address serious allegations of corporate misconduct on the part of Canadian companies operating abroad by developing supply chain legislation and passing comprehensive mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD) legislation.

For the better part of two decades, global partners in the South along with KAIROS, member churches, and networks have been calling on Canada to prioritize human rights and the environment, particularly by addressing the differential impacts of resource extraction.

In Canada and across the globe, the links between the extractive sector and gender-based violence have been more than proven. Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, gender diverse people, and children living near extractive projects experience the numerous social, health, environmental, economic, and political impacts most acutely. Water contamination, food insecurity, and gastrointestinal maladies have been reported by women and children in proximity to Canada-linked megaprojects. Women environmental human rights defenders are routinely harassed, targeted, attacked, and even murdered for their land defense efforts.

And yet, women, gender diverse people, children, and communities across the globe impacted by the Canadian extractive sector do not have real access to remedy and justice.

The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Business Enterprise (CORE) is not the office that was promised in 2018. Without investigatory tools—including the power to compel documents and testimony—the CORE's mandate is ineffective. Mediation, even if it incorporates GBA+, cannot be confused for accountability.

If the Government of Canada is serious about developing a Feminist Foreign Policy, it must bolster corporate accountability. The present mechanisms are insufficient.

What is needed at this moment are multiple and complementary legally-binding measures that require companies, their supply chains, and their business partners to prevent and avoid causing harm to people and the environment; and if these companies or any of their partners violate internationally recognized human rights and/or the environment, they must be held liable and provide remedy.

While EU member countries have started to enact supply chain legislation requiring companies to exercise human rights due diligence, Canada is falling behind. The Government of Canada must build on the lessons learned and best practices emerging in Europe. Canada must also integrate human rights due diligence standards set forth in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Multinational Enterprises (MNE) Guidelines, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Tripartite Declaration, and the OECD Due Diligence Guidance.

KAIROS continues to press for a CORE with the power to investigate. In addition, KAIROS endorses the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability's (CNCA) model mHREDD legislation and urges the Canadian government to use it as a blueprint for federal legislation.

Sincerely,



Aisha Francis  
Executive Director

Cc: The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Labour  
The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development  
The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade  
Mark Strahl, MP  
Scott Duvall, MP  
Louise Chabot, MP  
Annamie Paul, Leader, Green Party of Canada  
Emily Dwyer, Coordinator, Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA)