



MiningWatch Canada  
Mines Alerte



Friends of the Earth Les Ami(e)s  
de la Terre

July 13, 2005

## **ACTION ALERT: PARLIAMENT WANTS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO STOP SUPPORTING DESTRUCTIVE MINING PROJECTS OVERSEAS!**

**SUMMARY:** Parliament has called on the Government of Canada to take action to end the devastating social and environmental impacts of Canadian mining operations overseas. A recent Parliamentary report calls on the Government to: (i) stop using taxpayer money to support destructive Canadian mining projects abroad; (ii) hold Canadian mining companies legally accountable for environmental and human rights violations in other countries, and; (iii) force the World Bank to respect international human rights standards. The Government has about 60 days left to respond and it would like nothing more than to sweep the report under the carpet. Action is needed to pressure the Government to adopt Parliament's recommendations and to immediately address ongoing international scandals associated with the Canadian mining industry.

### **WHAT TO DO?**

**1. GET THE WORD OUT AND ORGANIZE!** Broadly disseminate this message. Talk to media contacts. Encourage others to take action.

**2. TELL THE GOVERNMENT WHAT YOU THINK!** Write and call the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Industry, and the Minister of Natural Resources Canada (contact info below). Tell them that you want the Government to adopt the Committee's recommendations and take immediate action to address ongoing conflicts related to Canadian mining abroad. We have provided a sample letter below for your consideration. Please note, however, that sending letters in your own words – and by fax or regular mail - is far more effective than sending a form letter by email. Also, please try and send us a copy of your letters to help us keep track of the response (our contact information below). **IF YOU ARE OUTSIDE OF CANADA IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE MINISTERS LISTED BELOW HEAR FROM YOU.**

**3. TELL YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WHAT YOU THINK!** If you live in Canada, contact your Member of Parliament (MP) and tell them that you support the report adopted by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Ask your MP to explain what they are doing - and will do - to ensure that the Government adopts the recommendations.

**4. SUPPORT FRIENDS OF THE EARTH CANADA AND MININGWATCH CANADA!** If you are interested in receiving future action alerts related to the international activities of Canadian mining companies send us an email (contact information below). We also need your financial assistance to keep the work going. Charitable donations can be made through our respective websites: [www.foecanada.org](http://www.foecanada.org) and [www.miningwatch.ca](http://www.miningwatch.ca)

**BACKGROUND:** Organizations across Canada and around the world have been working to raise awareness about the devastating social and environmental impacts that are all too often associated with the operations of Canadian mining companies in other countries. Unfortunately, the Government of Canada has consistently refused to take meaningful action to address the growing number of problems associated with Canadian mining companies overseas.

In late June, the Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade adopted a report stating that they were "*concerned that Canada does not yet have laws to ensure that the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries conform to human rights standards, including the rights of workers and of indigenous peoples.*"

The report argues that "*more must be done to ensure that Canadian companies... conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and in conformity with international human rights standards.*" Among other things, the report urges the Government of Canada to:

- \* Condition Canadian support "on companies meeting clearly defined corporate social responsibility and human rights standards..."
- \* "Establish clear legal norms in Canada to ensure that Canadian companies and residents are held accountable when there is evidence of environmental and/or human rights violations associated with the activities of Canadian mining companies."
- \* "Work with like-minded countries to integrate and mainstream international human rights standards in the work of international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank..."

For a complete copy of the report (it is quite short) see:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/committee/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=8979&Lang=1&SourceId=122762>

The Standing Committee has requested "*a comprehensive government response to this Report*" and the Government, led by the Department of Foreign Affairs, is currently deciding how to proceed. In the past, the Government has consistently rejected calls for concrete action to deal with the many problems associated with the activities of Canadian mining companies abroad. The Government has also failed to call on the World Bank to make a clear commitment to abide by international human rights standards. If adopted in full, the report's recommendations would have a lasting effect on Government policy towards Canadian corporations overseas, the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

While the Government needs to take broad action along the lines outlined in the report, the Government also needs to take **immediate action** to address the many projects that are the source of significant and growing controversy overseas. There are simply too many projects to mention here, but some of the projects that demand immediate attention include the following:

- \* Vancouver-based **Ascendant Copper Corporation** is seeking financing to develop a copper mine in one of the world's most diverse and threatened ecosystems, despite vigorous opposition from local elected leaders and residents across Cotacachi County in Northwest Ecuador. The company is trying to raise millions of dollars on the Toronto Stock Exchange in order to move forward with its Junin project, and the Government of Canada has thus failed to call on Ascendant to suspend activities until outstanding issues can be resolved.
- \* Communities in San Marcos, Guatemala, are locked in a struggle with Canada's **Glamis Gold Corporation**. Glamis's Marlin Mine has been accused of violating indigenous rights and threatening scarce water supplies. Despite these concerns, the Government of Canada has been aggressively promoting the interests of Canadian mining companies in Guatemala. Local

communities recently voted to reject mining in the area, but the company has failed to accept and respect the community's wishes.

\* **TVI Pacific** is locked in a brutal struggle with communities in Siocon, Mindanao in the Philippines. The above-mentioned Parliamentary Report notes that the "*Subcommittee is deeply concerned about the possible impact of the activities of TVI Pacific Inc., a Canadian mining company, on the indigenous rights and the human rights of people in the area...*" and calls for a government investigation of TVI's activities.

You can find more on these projects at: [www.miningwatch.org](http://www.miningwatch.org); [www.foecanada.org](http://www.foecanada.org); [www.decoin.org](http://www.decoin.org), [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org), [www.dcmphil.org](http://www.dcmphil.org) (or do a simple google search).

### **CONTACT THE FOLLOWING MINISTERS WITH YOUR CONCERNS:**

The Honourable Pierre Pettigrew  
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125 Sussex Drive  
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The Honourable R. John Efford  
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580 Booth Street, 21st Floor, Rm: C7-1  
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The Honourable David L Emerson  
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### **WE CAN BE REACHED AT:**

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## **SAMPLE LETTER TO MINISTER:**

To: [NAME HERE]

I am writing to urge you to adopt the recommendations contained in the Fourteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and to take action around a number of urgent cases involving Canadian mining companies operating abroad. I am deeply concerned about the social and environmental impacts of Canadian mining companies overseas and I find it disturbing that the Government of Canada has thus far failed to take meaningful action to address this obvious problem. The above-mentioned Parliamentary report provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on this important issue.

In late June, the Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade adopted a report stating that they were "concerned that Canada does not yet have laws to ensure that the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries conform to human rights standards, including the rights of workers and of indigenous peoples." The report argues that "more must be done to ensure that Canadian companies... conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and in conformity with international human rights standards." Among other things, the report urges the Government of Canada to:

- \* Condition Canadian support "on companies meeting clearly defined corporate social responsibility and human rights standards..."
- \* "Establish clear legal norms in Canada to ensure that Canadian companies and residents are held accountable when there is evidence of environmental and/or human rights violations associated with the activities of Canadian mining companies." And;
- \* "Work with like-minded countries to integrate and mainstream international human rights standards in the work of international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank..."

The Standing Committee has requested "a comprehensive government response to this Report" and it is my understanding that the Government is currently deciding how to proceed. I am writing to express my support for the recommendations outlined in the report. I want to urge you to ensure that these recommendations are adopted by the Government of Canada and I would like you to please provide me with information outlining the steps that you are personally taking to ensure that this occurs.

The committee's report also calls on the Government to "conduct an investigation of any impact of TVI Pacific's Canatuan mining project in Mindanao on the indigenous rights and human rights of people in the area and on the environment, and table a report on this investigation in Parliament within 90 days." I support this recommendation and I believe that the Government should also call on TVI to suspend all activities pending the outcome of this investigation. I also strongly believe that the Government should launch investigations into the activities of Ascendant Copper Corporation's Junin project in Ecuador and Glamis Gold's Marlin Mine in Guatemala, and call on these companies to suspend their activities pending the outcome of the Government's investigation. I would like you to please provide me with information on what your office is doing to ensure that the problems associated with these projects are addressed.

Finally, I am appalled that the World Bank and other international financial institutions have not yet made clear and binding commitments to uphold international human rights standards. Please provide me with information on what you are doing to ensure that these institutions are no longer able to ignore international law.

As you know, more money is raised for the global mining industry in Canada than in any other country in the world and more than half of the world's mining companies list their shares on Canadian capital markets. Canada has a responsibility to develop mechanisms to hold these companies accountable for their actions overseas. This is a responsibility that the Government of Canada has failed to embrace. I hope that the above-mentioned Parliamentary report will prove to be an opportunity to address this glaring and damaging failure.

Thank you,