

Report Back

MiningWatch's Witness Testimony and Brief on the
Nexus between National Defence, National Security
and so-called Critical Minerals

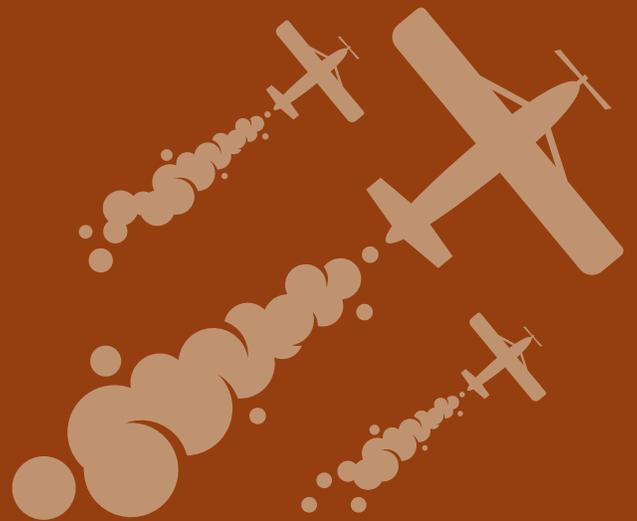
March 2026

Summary

At the invitation of the House of Commons National Defence Standing Committee, MiningWatch Canada submitted a brief to contribute to the Committee's Study on the Nexus Between National Defence, National Security, and the Critical Minerals Sector in Canada.

This report back includes:

-  A summary of our testimony before the Committee
-  Key takeaways from the brief
-  Our recommendations
-  A roundup of press coverage and our social media



Witness Testimony

On Monday, March 9, 2026, Rodrigue Turgeon, lawyers and co-lead of MiningWatch’s national program, presented MiningWatch’s brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defense as part of its Study on the Nexus Between National Defence, National Security, and the Critical Minerals Sector. In his testimony, Rodrigue Turgeon raised significant concerns regarding foreign powers’ access and control to Canadian mineral resources, the environmental and security risks associated with the expansion of mining, the importance of mineral sobriety, and the need to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local populations.



[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) Read the transcript of the hearing and watch the video here.](#)



Brief



Key Takeaways from the Brief

Current federal and provincial mining legislation currently provides few mechanisms to control foreign access to Canada's mineral resources. The Government of Canada should adopt a clearer and more transparent approach as to whether it intends to tolerate, accept or refuse foreign state access to and control over its so-called critical minerals, and then policies – particularly those around fast-tacking – should be aligned accordingly.

Expanding mining production for military, national security, or national defence purposes will only intensify pressures on the environment, water and air, as well as the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local populations, both in Canada and in other countries where Canadian mining companies operate.

- **Canada should prioritize "mineral sobriety" over expansion.** Reducing overall mineral overconsumption across all sectors is the only way to meet mineral supply targets across all sectors, including national defence.
- **Climate change is a real national security threat.** Diverting much needed resources from the energy transition in the name of national security will only worsen the dangers posed by the climate crisis.



Brief



- **Indigenous rights must be respected.** There can be no “responsible mining” under the free entry system. Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous Peoples must be mandatory before any mining licenses are issued.
- **Expanding uranium mining and nuclear energy is a national security risk.** It is impossible to separate uranium mining for the nuclear energy sector from that used in the nuclear weapons sector.
- **Canada’s mineral resources must never enable military aggression or genocide.** The federal government should establish transparent mechanisms to track so-called critical minerals and ensure they are not used for military aggression or human rights violations.

Minerals are non-renewable resources that leave behind long-lasting mining waste while providing insufficient and temporary economic benefits. We believe that we cannot pass on the burden to future generations, when we have the opportunity now to make decisions that will shape their future.

 [Read the full brief here.](#)



Recommendations

Recommendation #1 : Any new mining legislation introduced in Canadian legislative assemblies should give authorities greater leverage over access to and control of mineral resources.

Recommendation #2 : A clearer and more transparent approach should be adopted with regard to whether Canada intends to tolerate, accept or refuse foreign state access to and control over its so-called critical minerals, and these positions should then be reflected in policy through limited cooperation and restricted access to so-called critical minerals for hostile foreign entities.

Recommendation #3 : The Government of Canada must ensure and demonstrate that its national defence policies and action plans are compatible with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and that they lessen the environmental impacts associated with the extraction and use of so-called critical minerals.

Recommendation #4 : The Government of Canada should focus investments, resources, and efforts on achieving mineral sobriety in all areas, including the national defence sector.

Recommendation #5 : The reuse and recycling of so-called critical minerals should be prioritized in government investments, provided that these measures do not endanger public health and the environment.

Recommendation #6 : The Government of Canada should make firm commitments and establish a transparent and credible traceability system for its so-called critical minerals to assure the public that they are not used in the creation or proliferation of weapons used in violation of international law, including in genocides, whether these weapons are used by Canada or a third country

Recommendations

Recommendation #7 : Canadian legislation must not allow for the fast-tracking of permits to companies that are supported by any foreign entity hostile to Canada's national security.

Recommendation #8: Policies to accelerate mining projects must not weaken nor roll back environmental regulations and standards.

Recommendation #9 : A complete ban on seabed mining activities should be implemented in Canada and internationally, and the national defense sector must not be exempt.

Recommendation #10 : Uranium should be removed from so-called critical mineral lists and Canada should avoid expanding its use and reliance on nuclear energy.

Recommendation #11 : The Government of Canada must avoid and minimize any mining activity that could cause serious damage to fresh water and clean air.

Recommendation #12 : The Government of Canada must end the free-entry mining system and fully implement the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially with regard to Free, Prior and Informed Consent – including the right to say no.



Communications



Press Coverage

- March 9 2026. [Radio-Canada, online article](#). **MiningWatch Canada redoute l'impact environnemental de l'exploitation minière militaire.**
- March 9 2026. [Le Devoir, online article](#). **Renforcer la sécurité du Canada pourrait aussi passer par les déchets miniers.**
- March 9 2026. [Sudbury Star, online article](#). **Mine waste like those found in Sudbury could strengthen national security.**
- March 10 2026. [Radio-Canada, Côte Nord, radio interview](#). **Minéraux critiques et défense nationale : MiningWatch Canada appelé à se prononcer**, with Catherine Paquette.
- March 11 2026. [The Northern Miner, online article](#). **Canada's weakness lies beyond the mine gate, MPs hear.**
- March 23 2026, [Pivot, video](#). **Strange Lake : quels recours pour les Premières Nations quand une minière convoite leurs terres?**
- March 27 2026, [CBC Fifth Estate, web article](#). **Canada loaning millions to proposed Nunavik rare earth mining project linked to Trump White House.**
- March 27 2026, [CBC Fifth Estate, TV episode](#). **Critical Threat: Inside the Trump-linked deal to secure Canadian resources.**



Social Media

- Instagram: [Video](#), [Infographic](#)
- Bluesky: [Infographic](#)
- Youtube: [Video](#)

