

June 19, 2020

Ms. Sylvie Bédard  
Ambassador to Canada in Ecuador  
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c/c: François-Philippe Champagne  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
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c/c: Blair Bobyk  
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Global Affairs Canada  
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*Re: Public Condemnation of Statements made by Canada's Ambassador to Ecuador*

Esteemed Ambassador,

We are writing to you today to express our deep concern and rejection for statements that you made on the webinar “Mining and Oil as Sources of Revenue and Employment to Confront the Economic Crisis” and then again to Ecuadorian newspaper, El Comercio, on May 22, regarding Ecuador’s economic recovery and the role of Canadian mining companies, in light of COVID-19. During these occasions, you made statements about the important role that Canadian mining companies can play in Ecuador’s “economic reactivation”, and expressed your support to controversial mining companies in Ecuador by saying they were “responsible”.

As you are well aware, there are many Canadian mining companies who are engaging in mining activities in Ecuador, and in all of those instances where Canadian mining companies are present, there have been series allegations of human and environmental rights abuses, particularly where these companies are invading communities and people’s territories without their consent, generating conflict and disrupting their social fabric. In Azuay, Canadian company, INV Metals continues to advance its work despite several decades of widespread opposition to protect the sensitive paramos ecosystem of Kimsakocha; Canadian company, Cornerstone Resources continues to explore without consent and in some cases, against local court rulings, at its concessions in sensitive ecosystems of the Protected Forest Los Cedros, Cuellaje, Loja and Esmeraldas. In Indigenous Shuar territory, Canadian mining companies Aurania Resources, Salazar Resources and Solaris Resources continue to operate despite the fact that the Shuar Arutam Peoples have proclaimed their territories free of mining; in Zamora-Chinchiipe, where serious impacts to psychosocial and physical health of communities living close to the Fruta del Norte Mine operated by Canadian company, Lundin Gold; and in and around the sensitive paramo of Fierro Urko, Canadian companies Adventus Zinc and Cornerstone Capital Resources refused to heed concerns by Indigenous communities from the region, and withdraw from the area.

We are concerned by the fact that the representatives of the Canadian government have found an opportunity in this global pandemic, a pandemic which has produced irreparable damage and tragedy in Ecuador, to promote your country’s economic interests.

We are tired of hearing Canadian Government officials and Canadian companies falsely claim that Canadian mining is “responsible”, when we are very aware of the human and environmental abuses being committed by Canadian mining companies permanently around the world. The Mount Polley tailings dam breach is a very clear example for us of a mining-provoked tragedy which has affected the Indigenous and rural communities nearby, who will never recover their cultural and ecological ways before the rupture. The fact that the company has not been punished for its actions and continues to operate, only solidifies that mining companies face impunity all around the world. Ecuador will not be an exception to that rule. We know there are other examples, and that the Canadian public is paying a high

economic and ecological cost for the toxic legacies the industry is leaving for the future generations to clean up, as is the case for the over 10,000 abandoned mines, some of which are leaching toxins into nearby waterways, and which is estimated to cost the public over 9 billion dollars for basic closure and remediation.

As you are aware, living in our beautiful country, Ecuador is mega-diverse and does not suffer from the perpetual legacies that the mining industry has caused around the world, like in nearby Peru, and in your country of Canada. As such, we continue to breathe clean air, drink clear water, enjoy strong local agricultural production systems to feed our communities and benefit from breathtaking forests and landscapes bursting with thousands of species, endemic only to our region.

Our Constitution establishes that the preservation of the environment, the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, the integrity of genetic heritage, and water are strategic sectors of the public interest and of national priority. This is equally true for food sovereignty and the conservation of soils.

For these reasons, we are not willing to sacrifice all that we enjoy so that a few people can benefit from our destruction.

As such we respectfully request that your office, and your superiors, cease your unwanted interventions in the Ecuadorian economy. Only Ecuador's population, in organized or individual ways, has the right and obligation to decide the country's destiny. As Ecuadorian organizations and individuals we alone should have the right to decide what happens in our communities, since we are those who will most suffer from the impacts. If Canada has made a commitment internationally to protect Human and Environmental Defenders, then Canada should not be actively promoting mining interests in a country where the President has undemocratically said that regardless of what local people think, mining will be pushed through at all costs. Ecuadorian public officials have been threatening locally elected public officials with criminal indictment for their efforts to protect their lands and resources, and have a disastrous history of using the military to repress opposition to mining. Your insertion in this context is not only unwanted, it greatly exacerbates the risks and threats that our communities, and human rights and the environmental defenders are facing. We would like to remind that Indigenous and peasant territories house impressive biodiversity and hydrological richness, essential inputs for Ecuadorian food sovereignty. Please, do not contribute to their destruction.

Signed,

#### ORGANIZATIONS/ASSOCIATIONS/COLLECTIVES

1. Association of Agroecological Peasants of Intag (ACAI)
2. Acción Ecológica
3. Latin American Association for Alternative Development (ALDEA)
4. Amazon Frontlines
5. Amazon Watch
6. Assembly of the Cantonal Unity of Cotacachi
7. Assembly of the Peoples of the South
8. Association of persons with disabilities (ASOPERDIS)
9. Association of Agricultural Production and Commercialization San Roque del Barrio Porotillo Parroquia Salati Cantón Portovelo
10. Association of Proprietors of Rural Lands of Northern Ecuador
11. CAMINANTES - ECUADOR
12. CATAPA
13. Ecuadorian Coordinator of Organizations in Defense of Nature and the environment (CEDENMA)
14. Centre of Human Rights Documentation "Segundo Montes Mozo SJ" (CSMM)
15. Collective in Defense of Water and Life, Portovelo
16. Collective Water and Life Defenders, Loja

17. Critical Geographers Collective, Ecuador
18. Amazonian Community Cordillera del Condor (CASCOMI)
19. Committee of the Defense of Life and Nature of Gualaes
20. Eucumenical Commission of Human Rights (CEDHU)
21. Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENAIE)
22. Toisan Corporation
23. Coordinator of Cotacachi women
24. Coordinator of Intag women
25. Coordinator of Cotacachi Urban Youth
26. DECOIN
27. Agroecological School, San Lucas - Loja
28. Agroecological School, Tenta- Saraguro
29. Agroecological School, Santa Isabel- Azuay
30. Agroecological School, Rañas-Nabon- Azuay
31. Agroecological School, Kimsakocha - Tarqui - Cuenca
32. Agroecological School, Bulan-Paute-Azuay
33. Agroecological School, Hermano Miguel- Cuenca
34. Agroecological School, Ponce Enriquez - Azuay
35. Femininjas, feminist collective
36. Savia Roja Foundation, Cuenca-Ecuador
37. Foundation for the Defense of Nature and its Rights
38. Institute of Ecological Studies
39. Young Urban peoples of Cotacachi
40. Kanaka
41. La Koncha Batukada Lesbofeminista, Feminist Collective
42. Ecologist Movement of Women of the South - Ecuador
43. Observatory of Mining, Environment and Social of the North of Ecuador (OMASNE)
44. Shuar Arutam Peoples (PSHA)
45. Agroecological Network, Cañar
46. Community and Alternative Communication Network, "Infórmate Pueblo"
47. Saramanta Warmikuna
48. Union of Communities and Organizations of San Lucas, Ucors-Sayta
49. Yasunidos Guapondelig
50. Yasunidos Piñas
51. Mindo es Vida
52. Mancomunidad del Chocó Andino

## INDIVIDUALS

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