

THE  
COUNCIL  
OF CANADIANS



LE  
CONSEIL  
DES CANADIENS

COMMON CANADA  
FRONTIERS



MiningWatch Canada  
Mines Alerte

**June 11, 2009**

**Sent via fax: 613-943-1493**

Senator Marjory LeBreton  
Leader of the Government in the Senate  
The Senate of Canada,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A4

Dear Senator LeBreton,

We are writing to you today on behalf of three prominent civil society organizations to urge you and the Senate to halt the passage of Bill C-24, implementing legislation for the Canada–Peru Free Trade Agreement, by sending it back to Parliament for reconsideration. We believe this is the only responsible course of action following a recent police attack on Indigenous people peacefully protesting the fact they have not been adequately consulted about development on their land, and who are opposed to the free trade agreements with Canada and the United States. This attack resulted in at least 60 deaths, including a number of police apparently killed by Indigenous protestors in defence and retaliation against the police attack.

Since April 9, Indigenous communities in Peru have been holding peaceful protests condemning new laws that would allow for the rapid industrialization of the Amazon rainforest. These decrees were put in place by the Peruvian government to further facilitate the free trade agreements with Canada and the United States. Protestors point out that these decrees violate Indigenous rights and open the way for an unprecedented expansion of new transnational petroleum, mining, logging and plantation agriculture projects in the Amazon rainforest. Indigenous leaders are calling for international solidarity to safeguard the Amazon, 72 per cent of which is already leased for petroleum exploration and extraction.

Considering that 50 per cent of Peruvian oil and gas exploration is now being done by Canadian companies, it is our government's responsibility to ensure that if such development occurs at all, it is done according to international laws requiring consultation in good faith with Indigenous communities, and under the guidance of strong environmental rules. As written, the Canada–Peru Free Trade Agreement only pays lip service to both of these primary concerns while handing Canadian corporations enormous new legal powers to further challenge what few Peruvian laws might stand in the way of their profits.

Canadians expect their government to promote fair and sustainable trade when reaching out to other countries – not free trade and investment treaties that put corporate profits above human rights, legitimate protest and environmental protection. The Peruvian government has acted criminally and recklessly in attacking those who have a different vision of how their land should be developed than the Canadian companies who will benefit from the free trade agreement.

We urge you to do whatever you can to halt the passage of Bill C-24, implementing legislation for the Canada–Peru FTA, including sending it back to Parliament for reconsideration.

Sincerely,



-----  
Jamie Kneen  
MiningWatch Canada

-----  
Stuart Trew  
The Council of Canadians

-----  
Rick Arnold  
Common Frontiers

CC: Senator James Cowan, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate

**Organizational bios:**

The Council of Canadians is one of Canada’s largest citizens’ organizations with 60,000 members and over 70 volunteer chapters across the country. The organization works locally, provincially, nationally and internationally to promote progressive policies on fair trade, clean water, energy security, public health care and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians.

MiningWatch Canada (MWC) is a pan-Canadian initiative supported by environmental, social justice, Aboriginal and labour organisations from across the country. It addresses the urgent need for a co-ordinated public interest response to the threats to public health, water and air quality, fish and wildlife habitat and community interests posed by irresponsible mineral policies and practices in Canada and around the world.

Common Frontiers (CF) is a multi-sectoral network of labour, human rights, environmental, student, church, international development, and other social justice organizations. It proposes the building of an alternative model for social and economic integration in the Americas as distinct from the discredited concept of 'free trade'. It is also the Canadian representative for the Hemispheric Social Alliance that is headquartered in Bogotá, Colombia.