



For immediate release

Witnesses Challenge Canada Over Mining Abuses Across Latin America and the Caribbean

At a regional human rights hearing, community representatives from six countries accuse Canada of enabling mining-related harms through its support for Canadian mining companies and its failure to enforce accountability

SOURCE: MiningWatch Canada, Justice and Corporate Accountability Project, Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability, Earthworks, Americas Policy Group, International Human Rights Clinic – University of Illinois Chicago School of Law

OTTAWA, October 27, 2026 – Community representatives from six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean will address Canada’s record on corporate accountability today at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([IACHR](#)), detailing [how Canada has failed](#) to create effective mechanisms of oversight and accountability and continued to support its mining companies despite known risks of serious human rights abuses and environmental harm.

Witnesses from Mexico, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, and Argentina will [share firsthand accounts](#) of threats and violence against environmental defenders, the criminalization of community leaders, restrictions on freedom of movement, water contamination, and damage to health and livelihoods – all linked to Canadian mining operations.

“These testimonies expose a long-standing and well-documented pattern of abuse that Canada helps enable by promoting and supporting its mining companies abroad while failing to hold them accountable,” says **Arturo Ezquerro-Cañete, Latin America Program Coordinator with MiningWatch Canada**. “Canada continues to put corporate interests ahead of human rights. Its failure to act is a political choice – and communities are paying the price.”

Home to approximately half of the world’s publicly listed mining companies, Canada supports their overseas operations through diplomatic assistance, public financing, and trade and investment agreements. Yet long-established harm linked to these operations is ongoing. Affected communities continue to face steep barriers to obtaining information, securing independent investigations, and accessing justice and remedy.

Dr. Charis Kamphuis, Canadian lawyer and member of the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project (JCAP), [will testify](#) that Canada’s failure to create effective mechanisms to address widespread abuse allegations tied to its mining companies outside its territory violates its international human rights obligations – including the duty to prevent, investigate,

sanction, and remedy rights violations – as well as its obligations as a member of the Organization of American States (OAS).

“As an OAS member and the home State of companies operating throughout the region, Canada has a responsibility to regulate the mining sector to prevent harm and ensure adequate access to remedy,” says Kamphuis. “It must act when it knows companies under its jurisdiction may be threatening or violating human rights. Despite nearly three decades of knowledge of these risks and harms, Canada continues to fail to meet these obligations.”

Canada continues to rely on voluntary standards and dialogue rather than enforceable prevention and accountability measures. The hearing comes just four months after the federal government announced the [elimination](#) of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE), established to receive complaints about alleged human and environmental rights abuses involving Canadian companies abroad.

Although CORE lacked independence and meaningful investigative powers, civil society organizations repeatedly called for it to be strengthened – not abolished. Its elimination further narrows the already inadequate avenues available to communities seeking accountability.

“Canada has no mandatory due diligence legislation, no effective mechanisms to investigate corporate abuses, no effective way to hold Canadian officials accountable when they fail to uphold their own policies, and the obstacles to accessing Canadian courts are nearly insurmountable,” says **Aidan Gilchrist-Blackwood, Coordinator of the Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability (CNCA)**. “Canada must adopt binding human rights and environmental due diligence legislation, establish effective independent mechanisms to investigate abuses and provide remedy, and ensure public financing and diplomatic support for Canadian mining companies are subject to enforceable human rights and environmental safeguards.”

“Communities should not have to sacrifice their health, wellbeing, safety and even lives to defend their human rights and territories from Canadian mining,” says **Paulina Personius, Lead International Campaigner at Earthworks**. “Company profits and rapid mining expansion are no justification for harms to local communities.”

“Our member organizations and courageous partners in Latin America and the Caribbean have a long history of calling on the Canadian government to address extremely serious violations of the rights of communities and Indigenous peoples from Canadian mining projects,” says **Lisa Kowalchuk, Co-Chair of the Americas Policy Group (APG)**. “Human rights obligations must come first, without exception. The shameful accountability gap must be closed.”

MEDIA CONTACT:

For more information or to arrange interviews with people testifying, contact:

Val Croft, Communications Coordinator, MiningWatch Canada, val@miningwatch.ca, 416-707-5986

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The IACHR hearing will take place in Panama on October 27, 2026, from 5 - 6:30 pm ET (4 - 5:30 PM Panama time). All IACHR hearings are open to the public and will be livestreamed through the IACHR's [YouTube](#) channel. Anyone requiring Spanish, English, or French interpretation can register via [Zoom](#). Journalists wishing to participate in the public hearings can register [here](#).
- [JCAP letter to the IACHR](#) regarding Canada's failure to fulfill its international obligations to communities impacted by Canadian extractive companies operating abroad (October 2026)
- [Backgrounder](#) on the call for a hearing and summary of witness testimonies (October 2026)
- [Spanish recording](#) of an October 27, 2026 press conference in Panama City featuring witnesses who will testify and supporting organizations