

A PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

A CALL TO STOP THE CANADA-COLOMBIA TRADE DEAL

We, the undersigned citizens of Canada, draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following:

WHEREAS, the violence against workers and members of civil society by para-militaries in Colombia, who are closely associated with the current Uribe government, has been ongoing, with more than 2,200 trade unionists murdered since 1991, as well as a host of violence committed against indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, human rights activists, workers, farmers, labour leaders and journalists;

WHEREAS, the Canada and Colombia trade agreement was negotiated following a framework similar to NAFTA which has mainly benefited large multinational corporations without providing real benefits to working families;

WHEREAS, under a NAFTA style Agreement, Canada and Colombia's ability to adopt autonomous and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental public policies, such as healthcare and public education, will diminish;

WHEREAS, labour side agreements under NAFTA have not been effective in protecting improving labour standards, as has been the case in Mexico, where over 1 million agricultural jobs have been lost in Mexico since NAFTA was signed;

WHEREAS, evidence given by senior Canadian negotiators before the Standing Committee on International Trade confirms that the type of labour protection clauses being sought seeks a monetary compensation paid by the perpetrating party to itself as a penalty for using lethal violence against workers, which is insignificant and could encourage the continuation of violence;

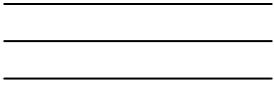
WHEREAS, all trade agreements must be built upon the principles of fair trade, which fundamentally respect social justice, human rights, labour rights, and environmental stewardship as prerequisites to trade;

THEREFORE, your petitioners call on Parliament to reject the Canada-Colombia trade deal until an independent Human Rights Impact Assessment is carried out, and that the agreement be renegotiated along the principles of fair trade which would take environmental and social impacts fully into account while genuinely respecting labour rights and the rights of all affected parties.

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Please return (postage paid) to: Peter Julian, M.P. for Burnaby—New Westminster (Aussi disponible en français)
Room 178, Wellington Building, House of Commons
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Peter Julian, MP
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