



PRESS RELEASE

WHAT CANADIANS CAN DO FOR CONGOLESE

On August 31st, Sigrid Johnson was appointed Canada's new Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). KAIROS¹ is asking for your help to encourage the new Ambassador to support political processes in the DRC that include further democratic development and a commitment to the rule of law.

Over the last few months, dozens of mining contracts signed during the transition from dictatorship to democracy have been reviewed by a panel set up by the Congolese government under pressure of Congolese civil society.

KAIROS is requesting that Canada demand the publication of the final report of the ministerial commission, and ensure that any new agreements between the Congolese authorities and mining companies (particularly Canadian companies) include a commitment to protect the rights of Congolese including their right to get a fair share of the wealth of their country.

Two years ago, Pascal Kabangulu, Executive Director of the KAIROS partner Héritiers de la justice was assassinated allegedly for investigating the links between illicit mining activities in South Kivu province and local authorities, particularly the military. Eastern DRC has a notoriously troubled history of combining resource extraction, human rights abuses and so-called "militarized commerce". Those believed to have committed this act in the military and local government have still not been brought to justice.

¹(Kairos Canadian churches working together for justice and peace. Faithful action for justice and peace. To learn more about Kairos:

<http://kairoscanada.org>

To learn more about Hand in Hand for Peace go to www.handinhandforpeace.com

REQUESTED ACTION

Please send a letter, fax, or email to Kinshasa urging the new Ambassador to make the defence of human rights a priority during her tenure. Please consider including some of the following points in your message:

1. Elections in 2006 are only the first step to political stability.

In talks with the Congolese government, Canada must place emphasis on the need to develop a strong and independent judicial system that protects people's right to speak against any policies and practices of Congolese civil and military officials;

2. Justice for victims of crimes and political murders must be ensured. Canada should work with the local human rights groups in demanding a new judicial inquiry into the killing of Pascal Kabangulu;

3. Control over the DRC's vast natural resource wealth has been, and continues to be a major cause of violence in the country. Canada must support efforts to improve management of natural resources, including by requiring companies to comply with international human rights law.

Canadian companies should adhere to all international laws when investing overseas and Canada should pursue its own domestic legislation to hold Canadian companies operating overseas accountable.

ADDRESS LETTERS TO:

**Ambassador Sigrid Johnson
The Canadian Embassy**

P.O. Box 500, (Kinshasa) Stn A,
Ottawa, ON
K1N 8T7 Canada

Fax: (243) 99-997-5403

E-mail: kinshasa@international.gc.ca

For a further update on the situation in the DRC, please go to:

<http://kairoscanada.org/e/humanrights/DRCupdate0711.asp>

Please consider sending a copy of your letter to KAIROS:

129 St. Clair Ave W.
Toronto, ON
M4V 1N5
Attn: John Lewis

Fax: 416-463-5569

E-mail: jlewis@kairoscanada.org

To find out more, please email John Lewis, Program Coordinator for International Human Rights or phone him at 416-463-5312 extension 224.

