

«Укуктук кыймыл: Бир Дуйно - Кыргызстан»
«Правозащитное движение: Бир Дуйно - Кыргызстан»
«Human rights movement: Bir Duino - Kyrgyzstan»



March 11, 2017

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada

80 Wellington Street Ottawa,

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justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

cc. François Philippe Champagne Minister of Trade,

François-Philippe Champagne

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Letter of support in favour of the creation of an independent ombudsperson office in Canada

Dear Primer Minister,

Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan" would like to express its support for the initiative to create an independent Office of the Ombudsperson on consideration of complaints related to violations of citizens' rights caused by the activities of Canadian mining companies.

Our organization Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan" (a legal successor of the Public Union "Citizens against Corruption") is working to protect rights of victims of Barskoon tragedy occurred on May 20, 1998, due to the fault of Canadian mining company "Kumtor Operating Company" that extracted at Kumtor gold deposit. The tragedy in Barskoon was caused by the accident when a truck carrying twenty tons of sodium cyanide tumbled from the bridge to the Barskoon River, which flows into Issyk-Kul Lake.

As a consequence of falling several tons of cyanide into the river, residents of five villages in Jeti-Oguz District were harmed: four people died; more than two and a half thousand received poisonings of varying degrees and over 800 people of them were hospitalized; more than 5000 residents of Jeti-Oguz village were evacuated. Dozens of pregnant women were forcibly aborted.

Despite the fact that nearly 20 years have passed since the accident, the rights of citizens affected during the Barskoon tragedy have not been restored, the people affected still have been suffering from various diseases, and the growth of the birth of sick children and the death rate of the population has increased.

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Up to date, the Canadian company has kept mining gold at Kumtor despite of the experts' findings, numerous protests of activists, human rights defenders, and residents of Issykkul region.

The company has continued afflicting great damage to the environment and, as the experts say, there is a likelihood of new ecological disasters due to its non-compliance with safety standards for storage of chemical waste from gold mining.

It is worth to mention as well that initially, at the stage of establishing "Kumtor Operating Company" and signing the agreements with the Kyrgyz Republic, the "Centerra Gold" was caught in corruptive deals and its activities did not meet the standards of transparency.

In connection with the mentioned above, the Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan" expresses its hopes for your support of opening an independent Office of the Ombudsperson on consideration of complaints related to violations of citizens' rights caused by the activities of Canadian mining companies. We believe that the activities of the Ombudsperson's Office will be promoting restoration of rights of victims of Barskoon tragedy and contributing to the preservation of the environmental safety in the whole region.

Respectfully,

Tolekan Ismailova,

Chair of the Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan"