

Media reactive: Feds leave “important” Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise leaderless for a year, complainants remain in limbo

May 21, 2026 – Today marks one year since the one-year mandate of the [interim Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise](#) (CORE) ended. Since then, the ombudsperson position has remained vacant, leaving remaining staff unable to move complaints forward.

Complainants, representing communities and workers who have suffered significant harm – and who were encouraged by Canadian officials to trust the CORE, often at substantial [risk of retaliation](#) – have been left without answers, despite repeated requests for even basic information about the office’s status.

The office also continues to lack investigatory powers and independence the government [promised](#) when the office was first created.

At least [36 complaints](#) are currently awaiting decisions from the CORE, but the office cannot advance complaints until the government appoints a new Ombudsperson.

In [March 2026](#), the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) expressed “concern” that the office remained vacant and “regret” at its lack of investigatory powers, citing ongoing allegations of human rights abuse and environmental degradation linked to the activities of Canadian companies abroad, as well as the significant barriers to justice faced by affected communities.

Shortly after the UNHRC report was released, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand told the [media](#) that the office is “important” and that the government is seeking to fill the position. Other ministers have similarly [touted](#) the CORE as evidence of Canada’s commitment to fighting forced labour in Canadian supply chains. No further information has been provided since.

Canadians from coast to coast continue to call on the government to act. A [parliamentary e-petition](#) on the CORE recently closed and is expected to be tabled in Parliament in the coming weeks.

Quotes

“The impunity of Canadian companies has a devastating cost to the lives and fundamental rights of affected local communities and Indigenous peoples. Canada’s failure to appoint an independent and effective ombudsperson suggests a lack of political will to meet its international

human rights obligations and a harmful lack of respect and empathy toward the tens of thousands of people victimized by Canadian companies worldwide.”

- Lafeef Johar, member of the Human Rights Council of Balochistan and CORE complainant

“At a time when Canada is expanding international partnerships and pursuing new ones, Canadians must insist that companies registered on our shores respect and honour human rights and human dignity wherever they operate. Not only is Canada obligated under international law to ensure that Canadian companies respect human rights at home and abroad, but we must seize the moment to show the world that corporate accountability and respect for rights are at the core of Canada’s business model. Anything less is a betrayal of Canada’s human rights principles.”

- David Matsinhe, Director of Programs, Advocacy and Research, Amnesty International Canada

“The Canadian government recently claimed the CORE is a key component of its strategy to combat forced labour in Canada’s supply chains. Yet without effective leadership, the CORE is incapable of fulfilling that mandate. By suggesting otherwise, the government is misleading the Canadian public, our trading partners and—most importantly—the victims of human and labour rights abuses who sought the CORE’s assistance.”

- Karen Hamilton, Director, Above Ground

“We work with communities in Latin American, Africa and Asia-Pacific whose rights have been violated by Canadian mining companies. Some of these community members have already filed complaints that are now languishing in limbo because there is no Ombudsperson, others have indicated to us that they would file a complaint if there was an Ombudsperson. The need for the CORE is well-established – now the government must bring in an independent Ombudsperson.”

- Catherine Coumans, Co-manager, MiningWatch Canada

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