

September 12, 2012

Dear Friends:

We are writing to you as the Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Canada's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). You may recall that the UPR is a new UN human rights review instituted by the UN Human Rights Council in 2008, under which (for the first time in UN history), the human rights record of every country is reviewed once every four years. We came together four years ago to co-ordinate civil society and Aboriginal engagement with Canada's first UPR. Since then, we have continued to work together to promote improved implementation of Canada's international human rights commitments.

Canada's second UPR before the UN Human Rights Council is scheduled for May, 2013. We are writing now to alert you to the fact that **the deadline for NGO submissions for Canada's Second UPR is just a month away, on October 9, 2012.**

Under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) procedures, NGOs can make written submissions raising issues related to a Canada's obligations under international human rights, including ratified human rights treaties such as the ICESCR, the ICCPR, CEDAW, the CRC, CERD and the CRPD and declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Submissions which comply with the [technical guidelines of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#) will be put up on the OHCHR UPR Website. Submissions may be a maximum 2,815 words (about 5 pages) for a submission from an individual NGO and 5,630 words (about 10 pages) for a joint submission. Extracts of NGO submissions will be selected by the OHCHR and included in its summary of stakeholders' information for the UPR.

For Canada's last UPR, 50 NGOs made written submissions. These are online at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRCStakeholdersInfoS4.aspx>.

Given the number of submissions expected for Canada, it is important to put your key issues forward as succinctly as possible with clear references to Canada's human rights obligations. Particular emphasis should be put on failures to follow-up on recommendations accepted by Canada in the last UPR. A good summary of the accepted and rejected recommendations is available at

http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/recommendations_to_canada_2009.pdf.

Prior to Canada's last UPR, many of you participated in meetings held in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver during which we were able to collectively identify key issues that should be addressed in Canada's UPR. These meetings led to the production of a [summary report](#) documenting key concerns to raise in relation to Canada's First UPR. That report was provided to all members of the Human Rights Council, was the basis for lobbying at the Human Rights Council in advance of Canada's UPR and led to a number of key issues being raised. We also prepared for the last UPR [a submission on Canada's international human rights "implementation gap"](#) endorsed by almost 50 NGOs. We will be circulating a similar submission for endorsement for the upcoming UPR.

While the record does not suggest that the Federal Government is likely to interact with the Universal Periodic Review Process in an effective or constructive manner, we think that it is critical for NGOs and Indigenous Organizations to continue to actively engage with it and to document the concerted and wide ranging attacks on human rights and on those who promote them in Canada. Recommendations emerging from the UPR still receive considerable attention within relevant federal departments; they have been the subject of reviews by both Senate and Commons committees; and we are using them in court cases. It is important that Canada face consequences at its second UPR for its blatant disregard of commitments made at its first UPR.

Your submissions should be sent to uprsubmissions@ohchr.org. We would also appreciate it if you could send a copy of your submissions to us, and let us know if you are interested in collaborative engagement with the upcoming UPR.

In solidarity

Leilani Farha leilani@equalityrights.org

Celeste McKay <celestemckay@me.com>

Alex Neve aneve@amnesty.ca

Vangelis Nikias <vangelis@ccdonline.ca>

Bruce Porter bporter@socialrights.ca

Sandeep Prasad sandeep@acpd.ca

Kathy Vandergrift <kathyvandergrift@rogers.com>