



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8

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Maina Kiai

Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Michel Forst

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Ben Emmerson

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais des nations

1211 Geneva 10, SWITZERLAND

Dear Mr. Kiai, Mr. Forst and Mr. Emmerson:

Thank you for your correspondence of April 27, 2015, regarding the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015*. Your letter was forwarded to Public Safety Canada by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as its subject matter falls within my Department's responsibilities. As you may know, Canada had a federal election in the fall of 2015 and a new government was elected. In light of the change of government, we are regretfully only now in a position to respond to your correspondence.

Canada highly values its relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Treaty Body Committees and the Special Procedures mechanisms, and shares the UN Special Rapporteurs' commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights for all individuals. The promotion and protection of human rights is embedded in Canadian values, and represents an integral part of Canadian domestic and foreign policy.

The concerns of the Special Rapporteurs regarding the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015* have been acknowledged and taken under consideration by Canada. The Government of Canada committed to assess how the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015* can be improved and then make necessary amendments. Following our commitment, the Minister of Justice and I recently launched public consultations on our national security framework which will inform our efforts to develop and introduce appropriate legislation and strengthen accountability with respect to national security, in a manner that protects both national security, and rights and freedoms as enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

As part of these consultations with the public, Ministers and officials will also engage stakeholders and experts such as human rights advocates and civil society associations to discuss specific elements of the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015* and other national security measures.

Canada is committed to maintaining a constructive dialogue with UN Special Procedures mandate holders and the human rights treaty body committees. As such, Canada invites the Special Rapporteurs to provide further comments on how the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015* could be improved through the online component of our consultation process at Canada.ca/national-security-consultation. Canada will also keep the Special Rapporteurs informed of the outcomes of these consultations.

I want to thank once more the Special Rapporteurs for sharing their concerns. Special Procedures are a vital aspect of a strong and effective international human rights system. These international mechanisms provide an independent perspective on the state of human rights in Canada as well as opportunities for the Canadian government to review its laws and policies. Independent, constructive criticism is critical to Canada successfully meeting its human rights obligations.



Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

c.c.: The Honourable, Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Honourable, Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice