



Mirek Topolánek  
President of the Council of the European Union

5 May 2009  
Ref.: B865

Dear Mr Topolánek

### **EU-Canada Summit**

In view of the forthcoming EU-Canada Summit that you will be co-chairing on 6 May 2009 in Prague, Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to the effect of the extractives sector on Indigenous Peoples' rights in Canada. The EU guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries highlight the commitment made by the EU to include human rights issues in all meetings and discussions with third countries. In light of that commitment, we hope that you will take the upcoming opportunity to raise this human rights concern with your Canadian counterparts, and also further discuss the topic at the next EU-Canada human rights dialogue.

Large-scale oil and gas development has drastically undermined the ability of Indigenous Peoples such as the Lubicon Cree, an Indigenous People in western Canada, to maintain their traditional economy and live on the land. The traditional territory of the Lubicon is in a part of the province of Alberta that is rich in oil and gas deposits. In the last thirty years more than 2,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled on this land. The Lubicon have consistently raised objections about the exploitation of oil and gas deposits on their land. The large scale development of the extractives sector in this region has all but destroyed the traditional hunting, trapping and food-gathering economy of the Lubicon.

Over the past two decades United Nations human rights bodies have repeatedly raised concerns over Canada's failure to respect and uphold the Lubicon peoples' rights in the face of large-scale oil and gas development on their unceded lands. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing have repeatedly expressed concern about the failure to reach a negotiated resolution of this dispute and the continuing licensing of additional oil and gas exploitation within Lubicon lands.

Despite the concerns of these bodies, there have been no real negotiations between the federal government and the Lubicon since the last round of talks broke down in 2003, and the licensing of additional oil and gas exploitation within Lubicon lands has proceeded without pause.

The EU-Canada Summit is an opportunity to call on the Canadian government to resume negotiations with the Lubicon, with a clear commitment to finding a just resolution to the land dispute that will fully uphold the rights of the Lubicon Cree under domestic and international law.

We would welcome any feedback on discussions with the Canadian government on this important human rights issue, and would be happy to provide any further information.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nicolas Beyer  
Director  
Amnesty International EU Office

Dáša van der Horst  
Director  
Amnesty International Czech Republic