



The Honourable Melanie Joly
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Parliament of Canada

Dear Minister Joly:

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the [Canadian Coalition Against Ageism \(CCAA\)](#), led by [International Longevity Centre Canada \(ILC Canada\)](#) and its partners. The CCAA represents a nation-wide social change movement with a reach of over 10 million Canadians. Our goal is to combat ageism against older persons, while protecting and strengthening their human rights, and galvanizing support for the adoption of a United Nations convention on the rights of older individuals.

We were delighted to see your recent [News Release](#) dated May 9, 2023, wherein you declare Canada's candidacy for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council. The CCAA's steadfast commitment to human rights and the principle of ensuring that "no one is left behind" has led us to propose the inclusion of "older persons" as one of "Canada's 6 priorities".

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the disturbing prevalence of human rights violations inflicted upon older persons globally, cruelly denying them their fundamental rights to life and health. Alarming, [Canada's long term care](#) residents accounted for a staggering 81% of COVID-19 deaths, nearly double the average in other OECD countries. We have observed how the governments of Canada and British Columbia were criticized by [Human Rights Watch](#) for their inaction during the 2021 heatwave in BC, which tragically claimed the lives of a significant percentage (91%) of individuals over the age of 60. It is well-established that older persons bear a disproportionate burden from the effects of climate change, endure heightened social isolation, and confront increasing rates of homelessness. The ["More Beds Better Care Act"](#) recently implemented by the Ontario Government has dealt a devastating blow to the autonomy of older Canadians, depriving them of their right to choose their place of residence. This legislation permits the relocation of older individuals up to 150 kilometers away from their families and communities, casting a profound shadow over their lives.

These examples serve as mere glimpses into the extensive array of age-based human rights abuses endured by older individuals. Canada's candidacy for the Human Rights Council presents a remarkable opportunity for the country to tackle these human rights violations both

domestically and internationally. By including older persons in the list of priorities and endorsing our plea for a United Nations convention on the rights of older individuals, Canada can effectively address these issues and promote a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

We would also like to express our gratitude for the invaluable contributions made by Canada's exceptional diplomats in advancing the human rights of older individuals. We are deeply appreciative of Minister Kamal Khera, Ambassador Bob Rae, and their involvement in the "Core Group" at the UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA). Furthermore, we commend Canada for its support of the decision document from OEWGA 13, which has established intersessional meetings aimed at strengthening the human rights of older persons.

Our collaboration with Ambassador Leslie Norton and diplomats in Geneva, has been instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of older persons in significant resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council. We were delighted by Canada's endorsement of the side event titled "Older Persons' Experience of War and Displacement in Ukraine" during the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council.

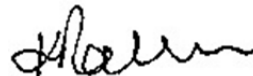
Under your exceptional leadership, we have full confidence in Canada's unwavering dedication as a staunch defender of human rights within the United Nations. As we move forward, it is our fervent expectation that Canada will persist in its tireless endeavors to protect and uphold the human rights of older persons. We implore you to firmly establish the inclusion of older persons as a paramount priority in Canada's UN candidacy for the Human Rights Council. Additionally, we earnestly request your resolute support for the adoption of a United Nations convention specifically addressing the rights of older persons. These decisive actions will not only solidify Canada's standing as a global leader but also contribute significantly to the well-being and dignity of older persons worldwide.

We eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



Margaret Gillis
President, ILC Canada
Co-President, ILC Global Alliance
Chair, International Committee CCAA



Kiran Rabheru MD, CCFP, FRCP, DABPN
Geriatric Psychiatrist, The Ottawa Hospital
Professor of Psychiatry, University of Ottawa
Chair of the Board, ILC-Canada & Steering Committee CCAA

Copies to:

1. The Honourable Kamal Khera, Minister of Seniors Canada
2. His Excellency Bob Rae, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York
3. Her Excellency Leslie Norton, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to Canada in Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament

Canadian Coalition Against Ageism Steering Committee



Human Rights do not have a best before date
Support a U.N. Convention on the Rights of Older Persons