

**Government of Canada Update to the 2018 Annual Report
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative
(2019 calendar year)**

All of the below information should be read as an update and in addition to the information provided in the 2018 report

A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

Commitment to the Rules of the VPI

1. Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles

No significant update since 2018 report.

2. Statement of commitment to implement National Plan (s)

No significant update since 2018 report.

Engagement in the VPI

3. Describe government engagement in the VPs Initiative

No significant update since 2018 report.

Transparency and Dialogue

4. Describe how government shares information about efforts to assist in implementation of the Voluntary Principles with other participants and the public

No significant update since 2018 report.

B. Policies, Procedures and Related Activities

Rule of Law

5. As related to the Voluntary Principles, describe relevant policies, legislation, procedures, and/or guidelines relevant to promoting and protecting human rights, consistent with international human rights obligations

In 2019, Global Affairs Canada released the updated edition of [Voices at Risk](#): Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders ("Guidelines"). The Guidelines are a clear statement of Canada's commitment to supporting the vital work of human rights defenders. Voices at Risk outlines Canada's approach and offers practical advice for Canada's diplomatic network to promote respect for and support human rights defenders.

Human rights defenders may experience numerous and concurrent forms of discrimination, harassment and marginalization. The Guidelines have been updated to include specific guidance for human rights defenders belonging to identifiable groups that face discrimination in various contexts, including but not limited to women, LGBTI individuals, Indigenous peoples, land or environmental defenders, persons

with disabilities, youth, individuals who defend freedom of religion or belief, journalists, and defenders in online and digital contexts.

The Guidelines also include a section on situations involving Canadian corporate entities. Canadian companies working internationally are expected to respect human rights and to operate lawfully, transparently and in consultation with host governments, Indigenous and local communities, and to conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

- 6. As related to the Voluntary Principles, describe (where appropriate and feasible) if the government has conducted or assisted with security sector reform, strengthening of the rule of law, and developing institutional capacities**

No significant update since 2018 report.

- 7. Within the context of the Voluntary Principles and in accordance with national and international law, describe how the government takes appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights abuses within its territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including extractive companies and public and private security providers**

In 2019, Canada named its [Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise](#) (CORE) who is mandated to review allegations of human rights abuses linked to operations of Canadian companies abroad in the oil & gas, mining and garment sectors.

Verification and Accountability

- 8. Describe progress on the execution of National Voluntary Principles Action Plan**

N/A

- 9. Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process as outlined in the Government Pillar Verification Framework**

No significant update since 2018 report.

C. Promotion/Implementation

- 10. Public communication of commitment to the Voluntary Principles**

- In 2019, Canada's commitment to, and promotion of, the Voluntary Principles was highlighted in speaking remarks delivered by Canadian officials at natural resources and/or responsible business events and engagements.
- In the June 2019 quarterly newsletter of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers Association (ICoCA), Canada referenced the value of the VPI as a useful framework for natural resource companies seeking to reduce risks of violence and human rights abuses related to security deployments.

- 11. Describe how the government engages with external stakeholders on the Voluntary Principles**

Canada regularly engages with external stakeholders on issues related to sustainable natural resource management and standards such as the Voluntary Principles through different means, including:

- Throughout 2019, Canada continued to organize meetings of the Canada Working Group on the Voluntary Principles in order to convene Canadian affiliated VPI members and other organizations that demonstrate a strong effort to implement or support the Voluntary Principles at a global level. The group consists of five companies, three NGOs, two industry organizations and the relevant Canadian federal government departments. The Working Group discusses collaborative efforts to strengthen the VPI, shares best practices and lessons learned, and updates one another on the efforts of other VPI members and general initiative news.
- In March 2019, Canada participated in the annual meeting of the Mining Security Working Group in order to engage a wide variety of mining security managers and professionals from mining companies across the globe, as well as mining security contractors and practitioners. Canada gave a presentation on the benefits of VPI implementation and offered its assistance to the audience in helping companies become acquainted with the VPs, and the requirements for membership.
- Canada supported the entry of a Canadian NGO to the NGO pillar of the VPI.
- Canada engaged some targeted governments to become VPI members through outreach in Canada to Embassies and at trade shows.

Please see #13 and #14 for information on in-country outreach to governments and the private sector.

12. Promotion of the Voluntary Principles within the government

No significant update since 2018 report.

13. Coordination in-country around the Voluntary Principles

In 2019, Canada continued to be actively engaged in VPI In-Country Working Groups.

- Nigeria: The High Commission of Canada in Nigeria continued to participate in meetings of the Nigeria in-country working group throughout 2019 along with the Nigerian government, other government, civil society and natural resource companies. In support of the leadership of the Embassy of Switzerland, Canada arranged and participated in advocacy meetings with various Ministers and Ministries to advance Nigeria's participation in the VPs.
- Colombia: Canada holds a seat on behalf of the foreign governments in Colombia on the directive board of the "Mining and Energy Committee for the VPs" (or CME, for its acronym in Spanish) where Canada participates on a monthly basis. Through its membership in the CME Canada supported the following activities in 2019: facilitated a first and introductory meeting between the CME and the Head of the VPs secretariat; hosted a High Level Dialogue organized by the CME with the Presidential High Counselor for Stabilization to discuss the challenges for Human Rights and the implementation of VPs in areas of post-conflict; financed the translation of all the modules of the VPs training course developed by the VPI into Spanish; and facilitated a number of important introductions and meetings to facilitate the use of the VPs in Colombia.

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Canadian Embassy in Kinshasa participates regularly in the Kinshasa working group on the Voluntary Principles. The working group's biggest challenge is gaining membership amongst companies that are based in Kinshasa, and the national government.
- Guatemala: Since early 2018, the Embassy of Canada, working with other like-minded missions, has taken advantage of a nascent interest by key private sector and civil society actors to promote the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. For most of 2019, the Embassy chaired meetings between key stakeholders from civil society, including from the private sector, to promote the implementation of these principles. In September 2019, Pan American Silver (formerly Tahoe Resources) presented to the group their new initiatives regarding role of women in security tasks at their facilities in Guatemala.

Other outreach, promotion, and implementation activities were conducted by Canada in:

- Burkina Faso: Canada organized a VPs workshop on the margins of the West Africa Mining Week (or SAMAO for its acronym in French) which included remarks from Burkina Faso's Minister of Mines and the President of the Burkina Faso Mining Chamber. The event included a panel discussion with private sector, government and civil society; as well as a best practices session with a security and human rights consultant. The President's Energy and Mines Counsellor closed the workshop with words of support for successful implementation of the Voluntary Principles to reduce operational security and human rights risks.

14. Describe how the government conducts outreach with domestic extractive companies to encourage them to implement the Voluntary Principles and join the Voluntary Principles Initiative

Throughout 2019, Canada reached out to a range of Canadian mining companies already implementing the VPs to inquire about their interest in becoming VPI members. Thirteen Canadian companies [report](#) on their VPs implementation as a requirement of their membership in the Mining Association of Canada. Canada also reached out to a range of Canadian mining companies operating abroad and not yet implementing the VPs to describe the benefits of the VPs implementation and VPI membership.

15. Describe how government enables and supports companies in implementing the Voluntary Principles.

No significant update since 2018 report.

16. Describe how government engages in conflict areas to assist Corporate Participants to help them identify, prevent and mitigate the human rights related risks of their security arrangements.

Throughout 2019, Canada targeted some outreach to governments that have Canadian natural companies operating in conflict areas in their country.

Risk Assessment

17. Describe how the government engages with companies on issues related to company risk assessment

No significant update since 2018 report.

Public Security

18. Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of public security providers

No significant update since 2018 report.

19. Describe how government works with companies around engagement with public security forces

No significant update since 2018 report.

20. Describe how the government promotes and enables inclusion of Voluntary Principles language in agreements between companies and public security providers

No significant update since 2018 report.

Private Security

21. Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of private security providers

No significant update since 2018 report.

22. Describe how the government develops appropriate policies and oversight for the government's own use of private security service providers

No significant update since 2018 report.

D. Lessons and Issues

23. To help determine what best practices and lessons learned can be leveraged going forward, provide a summary of issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the government (e.g. successful/unsuccessful engagement and implementation; from lessons learnt any changes to future priorities and plans for continues or emerging opportunities).

Lessons learned on outreach:

- The Outreach Working Group is a useful resource for collaborating with other governments and companies to conduct outreach to developing countries.
- Focusing on a small number of countries or companies that would especially benefit from the VPs implementation is useful as it helps to focus efforts; but the narrow scope of this approach also limits opportunities of new VPs implementation.

Opportunities in the coming year:

- Canada looks forward to exploring gender-sensitive VPI implementation in 2020 by focusing on how the human rights of women, girls, men, boys, and non-binary genders, as well as vulnerable groups are impacted by security forces in different ways.
- Canada will work with other VPI members to complete the VPs 101 implementation guide designed to help smaller companies implement the basics of the VPs.
- Canada will work with other VPI members to continue to determine new approaches to impact assessment, clarify roles of the Secretariat and the Chair, and participate in the first Peer Review of VPs Annual Reports.