



CORE OCRE
Canadian Ombudsperson
for Responsible Enterprise

Ombudsman canadien de la
responsabilité des entreprises



Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise

Complaints Portal Backgrounder

What is the CORE?

The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) reviews complaints of possible human rights abuses by Canadian companies operating abroad in the garment, oil and gas, and mining sectors. The office is the first of its kind in the world.

What is the CORE's mandate?

- We **promote** the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- We **advise** Canadian companies operating abroad on practices and policies related to responsible business conduct.
- We **review** alleged abuses of human rights arising from the operations abroad of Canadian companies or the entities they control. These reviews can arise from complaints filed by individuals, organizations and communities – or can be initiated by the Ombudsperson herself.
- We **recommend** remedies to Canadian companies and make recommendations to the Minister of International Trade regarding potential actions, measures or reforms.

How does the CORE work?

The CORE is an impartial body that operates at arm's length from government. In any dispute, it represents neither the complainant nor the Canadian company – rather, it represents the public interest in respecting and protecting human rights. The CORE works primarily in English and French but can support other languages through interpretation.

What constitutes a complaint?

The CORE accepts complaints about alleged negative effects on human rights as defined by an *adverse impact* on one or more internationally recognized human rights – including any of the rights referred to in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. A complaint can be filed against a Canadian company or an entity it controls so long as the alleged abuse occurred after May 2019 or is ongoing.

How does the CORE protect the complainant?

The CORE recognizes the risk of retaliation and makes the safety of the complainant a priority. Any complainant may initially choose to remain anonymous. The CORE will not commence a review until the complainant understands and agrees with the process. Only then will we alert a company that a complaint has been filed.

What does the process look like for a filed complaint?

Step 1: Intake

We talk to the complainant to obtain more information about the complaint. We decide whether the complaint meets the three admissibility criteria. May take up to 30 days from filing.

Step 2: Initial Assessment

If the complainant agrees, we tell the company about the complaint. We work with all parties to try to find a solution. If a solution is not possible, we address next steps, either mediation or review.

Step 3: Mediation

If the parties agree to mediation, a mediator will help the parties try to reach a settlement of the complaint. The mediator is an impartial third person - they do not represent the complainant or the company.

Step 4: Review

If the CORE decides to investigate a complaint, we gather information in two ways - if the parties agree, we start with joint fact-finding, which means we work collaboratively with both parties; if collaboration is not possible, we move to independent fact-finding.

The complaint process is flexible: In order to provide a resolution, the process may move between mediation and review before moving on to the next step: Public Report with Recommendations.

Step 5: Public Report with Recommendations

The CORE reports publicly on its findings, and, if appropriate, makes recommendations for remedies and for changes to prevent the same harm from happening again.

What does resolution look like?

The CORE is empowered to make recommendations to change workplace policies and redress past harms. It also has the authority to advise the Minister of International Trade to alter policies, pursue trade measures or take other actions against a non-compliant company. In all cases, the CORE will report its findings publicly.

The CORE Contact info for complainants and enquiries:

Online complaint form: <https://core-ombuds.canada.ca>

Email: complaints-plaintes@core-ocre.gc.ca

Phone: 343-203-5060