

Ottawa

Pièce 879, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél. : 613-992-6779
Télec. : 613-995-8461



CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Ottawa

Room 879, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-992-6779
Fax: 613-995-8461

Circonscription

1001, boulevard Maisonneuve est, suite 507
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4P9
Tél. : 514-522-1339
Télec. : 514-522-9899

Hélène Laverdière

Députée / Member of Parliament
Laurier—Sainte-Marie
helene.laverdiere@parl.gc.ca

Constituency

1001 Maisonneuve Blvd East, suite 507
Montréal, Quebec H2L 4P9
Tel.: 514-522-1339
Fax: 514-522-9899

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of International Development
Global Affairs Canada

January 31, 2019

Re: HALO Trust Project in Sri Lanka

Dear Minister,

We recently met with Adam Jasinski from HALO Trust, one of the largest landmine clearance organizations in the World. HALO has been working to remove the remaining landmines in Sri Lanka left-over from its civil war. Reports indicate that Sri Lanka has the possibility of being landmine free by 2020 with their support. These efforts save lives and livelihoods.

HALO has received four years of funding to be distributed through two, two-year grants from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The initial two-year grant supported the employment of 117 Sri Lankan staff from post-conflict communities in the north, deployed as 11 demining teams. The grant was due to end in November 2018, but due to some savings, they were able to achieve a no-cost extension through to 31st January 2019.

However, in August 2018 HALO was notified by GAC that continuation funding would not be available until 1 April 2019, and so prepared a proposal on that basis from 1 April 2019 to December 2020. They discussed this funding gap with the US Department of State, who agreed to allow them to bring forward the expenditure of some of their grant funds to keep their teams employed. The organization has now been informed by GAC that funding is unlikely to be available in the first quarter of the new financial year, and possibly not until after the parliamentary election. HALO does not have enough funding to sustain their efforts under these conditions, which would result in a reduction of approximately 20% of their capacity in Sri Lanka undermining Sri Lanka's ability to realize its demining goal by 2020.

Canada has long played an active role in the anti-landmine movement, most notably through their sponsorship of the Ottawa Treaty in 1997. However, a recent report from Mines Action

Canada indicates that political and economic support provided through GAC has dwindled leaving significant geographical gaps and a lack of funding for services for victims.

It is imperative that GAC follows through with their funding commitment to the HALO Trust to ensure that their fully trained work crews remain intact and Sri Lanka meets its demining goals by 2020. Two million dollars represents such a small amount of our humanitarian funds that this should be an easy decision for the government.

Mme. Bibeau, we implore you to restore HALO's funding and help save lives and livelihoods in Sri Lanka.

Sincerely,



Hélène Laverdière
NDP Critic on Foreign Affairs



Linda Duncan
NDP Critic on International Development