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The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C. M.P., Prime Minister
Hon. Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Harjit Sajjan, P.C. M.P, Minister of International Development
Hon. Mary Ng, P.C. M.P., Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development
Hon. Randy Boissonnault, P.C. M.P., Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance
Hon. Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Hon. Marcie Ien, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Hon. Rob Oliphant, P.C. M.P., Parliamentary Secretary Foreign Affairs

House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

January 27 2023

Dear Prime Minister, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretary:

On behalf of Dignity Network Canada and our 60 member organizations across the country, we are writing to you to request that the Government of Canada appoint a **Special Envoy responsible for international LGBTIQ+ human rights**. Under this government's mandate, Canada has moved forward as a true leader in the world around the protection and advancement of human rights for our communities. This is a record we can all be proud of.

However, around the globe today the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people are under attack. Nearly 70 countries still criminalize same-sex relations and in many countries LGBTIQ people face violence and discrimination. There have been some positive advances in human rights for LGBTIQ communities in many countries in recent years, however there have also been major setbacks. Canada should play a more central role at the global level in these issues.

Several key allies - including the USA, UK, France, Italy and Argentina - have all appointed an LGBTIQ Human Rights Special Envoy or Ambassador position in the past three years in order to coordinate and lead global efforts to strengthen cooperation on advancing LGBTIQ human rights. We believe that it is time that Canada be part of this group of leading countries working to better coordinate and advance human rights for our communities.

With the creation of Canada's first 2SLGBTIQ Action Plan, there is an excellent opportunity to move this work forward and solidify a leading international role. The appointment of this position, with attendant policy staff, would be a key part of advancing the commitments in the Action Plan to advance and strengthen the rights of our communities abroad. We have attached a [recent report](#) developed by our network which goes into further detail regarding the potential of the Special Envoy role, its value and examples of similar positions both at the international level and also other envoys or ambassadors from Canada.

Dignity Network Canada is committed to working smarter with various federal departments so as to achieve a stronger 'Whole of Government' approach to enhancing respect and inclusion for LGBTIQ communities globally. A Special Envoy would support collaboration across and within federal departments, and help coordinate and lead Canada's efforts on international LGBTIQ issues; including human rights, multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, international assistance, immigration and refugees, international trade, tourism and other areas with a global dimension.

We have also submitted recommendations for Budget 2023 regarding this Special Envoy position, and strongly feel that such a role would go far to enhance coordination and leadership within the government on international LGBTIQ human rights. The establishment of this role would be a fitting and lasting legacy at the global level and position Canada as one of the leaders for the future.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss further with your offices.

Sincerely,



Doug Kerr
Executive Director
Dignity Network Canada
doug@dignitynetwork.ca

Cc: Members of the Canadian Pride Caucus:

Hon. Senator René Cormier, Independent Senator, Co-Chair, Canadian Pride Caucus

Blake Desjarlais, M.P., Co-Chair, Canadian Pride Caucus

Hon. Kim Pate, Independent Senator

Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sport and Minister Responsible for Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec

Melissa Lantsman, M.P.

Randall Garrison, M.P.

Lisa Marie Barron, M.P.

Marc-André Millaire, Executive Director, 2SLGBTIQ Secretariat, Department of Women and Gender Equality