

Lockington, Elliott (SPAC/PSPC)

From: Media <media@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca>
Sent: July 23, 2020 9:18 AM
To: Johanne Bray; Reza, Arianne (Ext.)
Cc: Angela Intranuovo; Bryan Blom; Carole Charette; Caroline Audette; Lord, David (Ext.); Elizabeth Lindsay; Christensen, Esther (Ext.); Boulay, Francois (Ext.); Geneviève Côté; Irene Wu; James Stott; Jean-François Létourneau; Jeff Van Zyl; Jody Wood; Judith Rorai; Julie Hahn; Karim Adam; Kimberley Dicks; Liaison; Lucie Brosseau; Maria Cama; Marie-Christine Lalonde; Marie-Claude Hurens; Medias Sociaux / Social Media (TPSGC/PWGSC); Melissa Pacheco; Me'Shel Gulliver Bélanger; Mia Arruda; Mohamed Lash; Nathalie Larocque; Nicholas Dorion; Pamela Eades; Rachel Lagacé; Renee Stephen; Rosemary Kinnis; Sara Lacasse; Sarah Moreau-Bélanger; Selma Mesri; Sonia Harvey; Tracey Paterson; Usman Chaudhry; Amanda Semaan; Annie Scalisi; Brigitte Boucher; Crystal Allan; Edith Dauphinais; Haley Walsh; Isabelle Aubin; Noonan, Jamie (Ext.); Lyne Michaud; Michael Milito; Michael Scandiffio; Nathalie Bétoté Akwa; Nicolas Boucher; PA DGA Bureau SMA / AP PB ADM Office (TPSGC/PWGSC); Vanessa Audette; Amélie Gingras; Fabrice Ouellet; Josianne Jalbert; Martin Henry; Philippe Laroche
Subject: REVISED: Media Heads-Up / Tier 1 - COVID-19 - PPEs from China / POLITICO Canada

Previous response provided was added below.

The following media request has been identified as **Tier 1**.

Communications sector will work with your group to develop the first draft response. New information not previously approved should be identified in purple.

Highest level of approval: MO
Program ADM approved response: July-24-20 at 12:00

Media heads-up
POLITICO Canada
Blatchford, Andy (POLITICO Canada)
Date call received: July-22-20 at 19:50
Deadline: July-24-20 at 17:00
Tier 1 - COVID-19 - PPEs from China

CONTEXT (for your information):

The reporter initially contacted MO for a list of companies that Canada has purchased PPEs from in China since the start of the pandemic. Background information was provided by MO, as well as a written response. The reporter has follow-up questions on the information he was provided.

VALUE STATEMENT:

QUESTIONS / RESPONSES:

Q1. When making purchases from suppliers during the pandemic, especially those from China, has the government still been requiring the suppliers to agree to terms conditions prohibiting labour practices such as human rights abuses including forced labour?

Q2. Has the government been conducting an integrity check into each supplier's background - including those in China - during the pandemic?

Q3. If so, have the integrity checks discovered anything concerning for Canadian officials? Have any purchases been cancelled due to these concerns?

Response provided on July 22, 2020

1. Throughout the pandemic, there has been a surge in global demand for the PPE and medical supplies required in response to COVID-19. As a result, we continue to operate in a highly competitive marketplace, while facing the risks posed by the fragility of international supply chains.

While our work across government over the past months, including in partnership with Canadian officials and third-party logistics support on the ground in China, has helped to stabilize Canada's supply chains for PPE and medical supplies, we are not operating in normal circumstances and challenges continue to persist.

Considering the sustained pressure on supply chains as a result of the global competition for the same products, if we were to disclose information about specific contracts or suppliers, particularly with respect to international suppliers, we could jeopardize Canada's supply chains for these life-saving products. This would put our delivery to Canada and into the hands of frontline workers at risk, as we equip them in the immediate term and prepare for potential surges or future waves of the pandemic.

While we are not able to disclose specific details regarding suppliers and contracts related to Canada's procurement in response to COVID-19 at this time given the current environment, we intend to provide more information at a time when this risk has passed.

2. Our government is committed to ensuring the highest ethical standards for government procurement, and preventing human rights abuses including forced labour in federal-supply chains. When awarding contracts, the department of Public Services and Procurement Canada requires suppliers to agree to terms and conditions prohibiting these labour practices, and is conducting an integrity check into each supplier's background.

As part of our government's National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, we are taking steps to enhance oversight and scrutiny over our supply chains with the goal of ensuring that they are free from human trafficking and labour exploitation. We are working to add further protections against the use of forced labour in federal supply chains.

Canada remains deeply disturbed by the troubling reports on the situation in Xinjiang and have voiced our concerns. We have taken sustained action by publicly and consistently calling on the Chinese government to end the repression in Xinjiang.

This is an issue that we take very seriously, and will continue to address.

