



June 16, 2022

Via email: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: 2022 G7 Leaders Summit – Bar Leaders Concerns

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association as the G7 Leaders gather for the annual summit, to inform you about three issues of concern to the Bar leaders in G7 countries, and to seek your support in endorsing them. They are: condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine; protecting the confidentiality of the client-lawyer relationship; and recommending that Ministers of Justice meet at part of the G7 Leaders Summit.

The CBA is a national association of 36,000 lawyers, law students, notaries and academics, from every jurisdiction of Canada, with a mandate that includes seeking improvements in the law and administration of justice, and access to justice.

Representatives of the bar associations and law societies – including the Canadian Bar Association, Conseil national des barreaux (France), Law Society of England and Wales, Deutscher Anwaltverein (Germany), Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer (Germany), Japan Federation of Bar Associations, Consiglio Nazionale Forense (Italy), American Bar Association, and Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe – met last month to discuss these issues. Our statements are attached, noting the signatories to each one.

Russian Invasion of Ukraine

[The joint statement](#) condemns Russia's war on Ukraine, which "violates the fundamental and generally accepted principles of international law and represents an egregious unlawful attack on the rule of law." This statement is consistent with my letter to you of March 17, 2022, urging the Canadian government to take immediate action to help welcome vulnerable Ukrainians to Canada. It also dovetails with your government's steadfast support of Ukraine in its time of crisis.

Confidentiality of the Client-Lawyer Relationship

Client-lawyer privilege is a fundamental and foundational pillar of democracy and our justice systems. Lawyers must be able to exercise their profession without undue interference, intimidation or harassment in order to fulfil their duties for the administration of justice and the maintenance of the rule of law.

[The joint statement](#) asks G7 governments to take appropriate measures to ensure that client-lawyer privilege and professional secrecy are protected to the greatest possible extent against national or transnational law that might violate it. We ask that you consult directly with the bar associations and law societies on any legislative proposal that might impair professional secrecy and the independence of the legal profession.

The CBA is a vigorous defender of solicitor-client privilege, especially when at risk of encroachment or dilution. The privilege has been consistently upheld at the Supreme Court of Canada and has been described as paramount in ensuring public confidence in the administration of justice.

Ministers of Justice Meetings at the G7 Summit

Ministers of Justice play an essential role in upholding the Rule of Law and in protecting the separation of powers as fundamental principles of all democratic countries. [The joint statement](#) suggests that G7 governments consider convening meetings of the Ministers of Justice as part of the G7 Summit.

The CBA and the Minister of Justice share overarching goals such as ensuring equal access to justice and modernizing justice systems. These goals are consistent with UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16). It would be beneficial for the G7 to find common solutions to ensure accountability and access to justice for citizens worldwide. Moreover, an independent and efficient judiciary is a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic prosperity of a country.

We urge the Canadian government to take these issues into account in your G7 deliberations.

Sincerely,

(original letter signed by Stephen Rotstein)

Stephen Rotstein

Encl.

cc. The Honourable Mélanie Joly P.C., M.P.
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The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., M.P.
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