

Press Release - **Ottawa – April 21, 2008**
Canadian Physician's Group Releases Study Showing
Public Health Dangers of Uranium Mining

**Physicians for Global Survival calls for moratorium on uranium mining in Ontario and Quebec -
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Physicians for Global Survival (PGS) is the Canadian affiliate of IPPNW. **IPPNW** - International Physicians for the prevention of Nuclear War, the winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace prize, recently held their international meetings in New Delhi, India. I am reporting on the plenary presentation, a medical study of the impact of uranium mining on the public health of the local populations. The **Jadugoda Uranium Study** is vitally important to alert us to the environmental dangers of the plans for uranium mining here in eastern Ontario and western Quebec.

As the North American vice-president of **IPPNW** and an associate of the McGill Cancer Prevention Unit of McGill University and associate professor of family medicine and palliative care, I feel compelled to share these research findings to the media so that the true eco-toxic environmental hazards of exploration and mining of uranium can be better understood and hopefully prevented. The startling research data on increases in cancer deaths, birth defects and premature death in the Jadugoda study group is statistically significant epidemiologically.

The scientific evidence over the last 50 years shows that radio isotopes released in uranium mining tailings are some of the most toxic elements known to man. Micrograms inhaled into the lung guarantee increased incidents of lung cancer. Exposure to low dose ionizing radiation as internal emitters, not only cause cancer, but also have serious teratogenic and mutagenic effects on the population exposed. It is a tragedy that Canadian health and regulating agencies have not done population studies in places like Elliot Lake and Port Hope, to prove no harm as compared to the Jadugoda Uranium Study. With the recent lowering of Canadian radon gas standards, these studies are even more timely and vitally important to public health.

PGS recommends a permanent moratorium on uranium exploration and mining in the Ottawa River watershed, to protect this source of water for now and future generations. This is a view shared by the Ottawa City Council. In fact, Dr. David Salisbury, Ottawa's Chief Health Officer, said "mining in Sharbot Lake could pose a health hazard to Ottawa" (February 7, 2008) The College of Family Physicians of Ontario, numerous NGO and citizens groups, including fifteen municipalities in the area, urge for a moratorium on uranium mining. This has recently been done in the Grand Canyon water shed by the Colorado Medical Association who called for a state wide moratorium of uranium mining, to protect their aquifers. The Canadian government should do the same and protect the health of millions living in the region.

What better time than the day before Earth Day to express these concerns to protect the fragile ecosystem for generations to come. Following the press conference on April 21st, a **Citizen's Enquiry Into Uranium Mining** is planned for April 22, 2008 in Ottawa.

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Dr. Michael Dworkind, Dr. Eric Notebaert, Dr. Nancy Covington and Dr. Dale Dewar will be available for interviews - 30 -