

CANADA NEEDS AN AGENDA FOR DISARMAMENT



The Government of Canada and the Parliament of Canada have not done a comprehensive public study on disarmament. The last time that there was any parliamentary attention to disarmament was over twenty years ago. In 1998, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee conducted a narrowly-focused report on nuclear deterrence and disarmament, which was entitled, *Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons for the Twenty-First Century*. It is time that Canada make disarmament a national priority.

Disarmament is the act of **reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons**. The removal of arms does not mean insecurity and defencelessness. Disarmament courageously creates the space for re-imagining the concept of security and re-envisioning the role of the state. It can also liberate international relations from the threat and use of armed force. Disarmament relies on the sophisticated, nonviolent practice of conflict prevention, diplomacy and mediation.

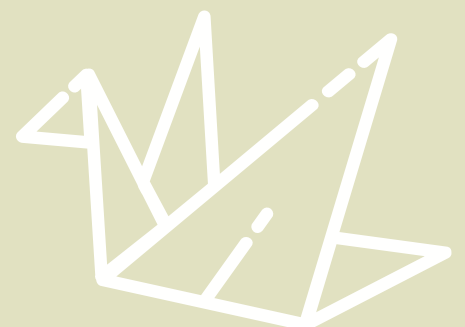
Three years ago, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres urged members states to make disarmament a priority and launched *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. The 2018 Agenda for Disarmament has four main pillars:

- **Disarmament that saves humanity** by endeavouring for a world free of nuclear weapons, strengthening norms against other weapons of mass destruction, and preventing the emergence of new domains of strategic competition and conflict.
- **Disarmament that saves lives** by mitigating the humanitarian impact of conventional arms and addressing the excessive accumulation and illicit trade.
- **Disarmament for future generations** by ensuring responsible innovation and use of advances in science and technology, keeping humans in control of weapons and artificial intelligence, and ensuring peace and stability in cyberspace.
- **Strengthening partnerships for disarmament** by reinvigorating disarmament institutions and processes, engaging regional organizations, ensuring the full and equal participation of women, empowering youth as a force for change, and enhancing participation by civil society and engagement by the private sector.

The Agenda explains that disarmament can be achieved through measures such as elimination and destruction of weapons, prohibitions and restrictions, non-proliferation, regulation, transparency and confidence-building protocols, and remediation.

Disarmament is also essential to maintain international peace and security, protect civilians, and promote sustainable development. The Agenda acknowledges the important contribution of disarmament to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, in particular, **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-Being), **SDG 8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Secretary-General Guterres called on all member states to create national plans for disarmament that include concrete actions and timelines.

Last year, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation (PNND) published a handbook, *Assuring Our Common Future: A Guide to Parliamentary Action in Support of Disarmament for Security and Sustainable Development*, that complements the UN initiative. This handbook offers practical recommendations for parliamentary action and policy on disarmament. The 2018 UN Agenda and 2020 PNND Handbook provide the necessary resources for the Government of Canada and the Parliament to take action.



MAKE DISARMAMENT A POLITICAL PRIORITY

The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is calling for:

- The federal government to heed Secretary-General Guterres' appeal and develop a national agenda for disarmament.
- The House of Commons' Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE). to conduct a comprehensive study that includes public consultations across the country, expert witnesses, a report and recommendations.
- The Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA) conduct a comprehensive study on disarmament that includes public consultations across the country, expert witnesses, a report and recommendations.

Our Disarmament Priorities for Canada:

- Develop a national action plan for disarmament that include specific actions and timelines.
- Establish a dedicated Ambassador for Disarmament who regularly consults with civil society
- Sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).
- Establish a federal fund for public education, research and activity in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.
- Consult, include and empower Canadian women in disarmament initiatives to adhere to UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and to the Beijing Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace.
- Conduct a gender analysis of disarmament for Canada that supports UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Educate, engage and empower Canadian youth for disarmament to support UN Security Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.
- Conduct a public analysis of military spending that considers the opportunity costs
 - According to NATO's Defence Expenditure latest report, Canada's defence spending was dramatically increased over the past five years to \$30.8 billion, which constitutes 1.31% of our GDP. Canada cannot afford to meet NATO's 2% target for military spending.

About VOW: The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization established in 1960 and is comprised of a network of diverse women across the country. VOW has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every year takes a delegation of women to the UN Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York. For over 60 years, VOW has tirelessly advocated for a world without war. VOW stands for a feminist peace-based on nonviolence, disarmament, diplomacy and common security with gender equality. For more information on our disarmament campaign, click [here](#).

Contact VOW:

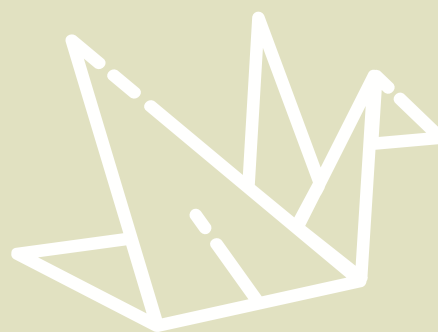
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This campaign is supported by **Science for Peace**. For more information about Science for Peace, click [here](#).