



Canadian Voice of
Women for Peace
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The Honourable Marilou McPhedran, Senator
The Senate
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

July 28, 2022

Re: JOINT LETTER: Request for a meeting
Our call for Canada to end the war in Ukraine, ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and to reduce military spending and prioritize diplomacy and disarmament

Dear Senator McPhedran,

We, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom Canada (WILPF), are writing to you about our concerns on Canada's foreign and defence policies and are requesting a meeting with you. We also know that you recently attended the ICAN's humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons conference in Vienna last month. We are appreciative of your efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security agenda and we hope to hear from you.

As you know, our two organizations represent thousands of women peacebuilders and activists across the country. For decades, we have worked on education, research and campaigns related to peace, nonviolence, disarmament, demilitarization, Women Peace and Security (WPS), climate action among many other issues. We have provided more information about us and some resources at the end of this letter. We would like to request a Zoom meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss Canada's role in the ongoing war in Ukraine, disarmament and WPS.

We would like to briefly share with you some of our concerns in this letter and hope to discuss them further with you. First, we are opposed to Canada sending weapons to Ukraine, which is prolonging the war and suffering of the people. We are concerned that Canada has not called for a ceasefire or negotiations to end the fighting. It is in the best interests of not only women and children in Ukraine, but all Ukrainians, Russians and the whole world to stop the war and come to a negotiated resolution. We are concerned that Canada is only using military means and not diplomacy, disarmament and de-escalation to resolve international conflict. We would also like to let you know that one of our younger VOW members has been awarded the *OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security: Training on Arms Control and Disarmament*. We would like to see greater federal support for youth for peace, disarmament and non-militarized security work.

Second, we are distressed that Canada did not send an official representative or delegation to observe the First Meeting of Parties on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in Vienna from June 21- June 23. Instead, a week later the Prime Minister, Minister Anand and Minister Joly went to Madrid to attend the NATO Summit. With NATO's new Strategic Concept, allies including Canada have re-affirmed NATO's dangerous nuclear deterrence as a supreme guarantee of security even though it risks an accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons. We believe, as you do, that nuclear weapons must be abolished for global security. We are wondering about the possibility of the Senate doing a study on disarmament and the TPNW. We would like to know how we can collaborate with you more closely on nuclear disarmament.

Third, we are against the federal government increasing military spending. According to NATO's latest *Defence Expenditures* report, Canada's military spending has increased from \$20 billion in 2014 to \$35 billion in 2022, which is a 75% increase. In March, another \$8 billion was added to the defence budget. Minister Anand said that military spending would continue to rise. However, last month, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report *Canada's Military Expenditure and the NATO 2% Spending Target*, which stated:

The PBO forecast thus indicates that total Government of Canada military expenditures will increase from \$36.3 billion in the 2022-23 fiscal year to approximately \$51.0 billion in 2026-27. The corresponding increase in the share of military expenditure to GDP is from 1.33 percent in 2022-23 to 1.59 percent in 2026-27 **(Emphasis added. Please see reference at the end of this letter)**.

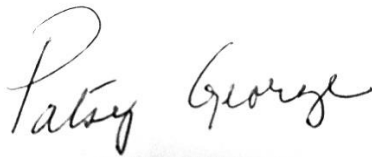
Thus, for Canada to reach NATO's 2% GDP target, the PBO determined that the federal government would have to add an additional \$75 billion to the defence budget over the next five years. This is a staggering amount. Moreover, NATO demands that Canada spend 20% on new equipment. The federal government has announced the procurement of new fighter jets, armed drones, attack helicopters and warships. VOW and WILPF are opposed to any increases to military spending and the procurement of new weapons systems. This spending is irresponsible when Canada is a climate emergency and Canadians are faced with pressing social challenges like homelessness, poverty, the pandemic and the opioid crisis. We are calling for a reduction of military spending, phased demilitarization and a re-allocation into the green, care economy.

Canadians need investment in programs that will improve their well-being and quality of life including health care, child care, elder care, affordable housing, education, climate action, environmental protection, public transit and arts and culture. First Nations communities especially need greater investment to fulfill the federal government's commitment to implement the recommendations of *Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* and of the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. We also bring to your attention that the federal government has committed to do a gender-based analysis of public spending and policy-making, so we are asking that a gender-based analysis of military spending be conducted and publicly reported. We believe that such an analysis would show that greater investment in the military does not meet the needs and priorities of women and girls in Canada. We are also wondering about the possibility of the Senate doing a study on the opportunity costs of investing in the military and new fighter jets instead of spending in federal social and environmental programs.

Finally, we are concerned that peacekeeping and peace support operations through the United Nations has not been a priority for the federal government for many years. According to the United Nations' Peacekeeping office's latest report on the ranking on country contributions, Canada is currently ranked 70th in the world with only 58 soldiers wearing a UN blue helmet. Despite the federal government's Elsie Initiative to increase women in peace support operations, Canada has only 21 women serving with the UN. By contrast, Canada has 1,375 soldiers involved in one NATO operation, Operation REASSURANCE in Eastern Europe. Defence Minister Anand announced that Canada would be sending even more troops to Latvia though this will escalate the crisis in the region. We want Canada to be a leader in peace, peacekeeping and disarmament not provocative military operations. We would like the Senate to conduct a study on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and disarmament.

We would like to discuss these aforementioned issues with you and more. We would also like to hear about your work on the Senate committee and about your recent trip to Vienna. We can meet with you at a time that works best in your busy schedule. We can be reached at info@vowpeace.org or by phone: 416-603-7915. We look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,



Co-chair Patsy George

On behalf of co-chair Ellen Woodsworth and board
the Women's International League for Peace &
Freedom (WILPF) Canada



Co-chair Lyn Adamson

On behalf of co-chair Hannah Hadikin and the
board the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
(VOW)

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is the largest national feminist peace organization with members and chapters across the country. VOW was established in 1960 and is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization comprised of a network of diverse women. VOW's main office is in Toronto. VOW runs many campaigns related to women, peace, disarmament and anti-militarism. VOW has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every year brings a delegation of Canadian women to the UN Commission on the Status of Women conference. 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.

Web site: <http://vowpeace.org>

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Canada is a membership-led organization committed to a feminist peace, social justice, and gender equality. We are a non-partisan, non-governmental organization members across the country. We are the national section of WILPF International, which is the world's longest standing women peace organization founded in 1915, with 32 Sections and 13 Groups across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Two of our leaders, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, won the Nobel Peace Prize. WILPF International is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and has a

disarmament program called *Reaching Critical Will* in New York. Our *Peace Women* program monitors the United Nations' Women, Peace & Security agenda and we have an international *Environment Working Group*.

Web site: wilpfcanada.ca

Sources:

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<https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/403/huma/rep/rep05nov10-e.pdf>

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https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/02_country_ranking_49_april_2022.pdf

WILPF (2022) *Soaring: The Harms and Risks of Fighter Jets and Why Canada Must Not Buy a New Fleet*:

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