



ANNUAL 2022 REPORT 2022

Presented to the Virtual Annual General Meeting October 29th, 2022

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW)

An organization working to build peace through education, advocacy, collaboration and raising women's voices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Established in 1960, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is Canada's oldest national feminist peace group. We are a non-partisan, non-profit membership-based organization with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). VOW values and honours women in all of our diversities and provides women the opportunity to have their voices heard locally, nationally, and internationally on issues concerning peace.

VOW was founded as a feminist group committed to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Over the years, VOW has undertaken many initiatives in the pursuit of peace, moving from an initial emphasis on nuclear disarmament to the abolition of war, the promotion of non-violent means of conflict resolution, and social justice in a sustainable world.

VOW is one of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cited by UNESCO's standing committee in the working group report entitled "The Contribution of Women to the Culture of Peace".



An accredited NGO to the United Nations, affiliated to the Department of Public Information (DPI) and ECOSOC, VOW was the Canadian lead group for peace at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. We have been attending the Commission on the Status of Women for many years and were part of the international lobby which succeeded in the adoption in 2000 of the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

VISION

We are a women's organization using a feminist approach in building and leading cultures of peace.

MISSION

We are a national women's organization focused on building cultures of peace through education, advocacy and amplifying the voices of women.







2. VOWNATIONAL ACTIVITIES Advocacy Action

Peace Education & Outreach United Nations Engagement







a) ADVOCACY ACTION

So much of what VOW centres on is ACTION and how we can make an impact that will move us towards a more peaceful future where conflict is resolved with non-violent strategies. The pages that follow feature highlights.

Anti-War Action

In January, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace helped to lead a coalition of groups, activists and academics to publish a statement and petition calling for Canada to demilitarize the conflict between NATO and Russia over Ukraine.

The statement urged the Trudeau government to reduce tensions by ending arms sales and military training in Ukraine, opposing Ukraine's membership in NATO and signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The statement explained that more weapons, soldiers and special

Canada sending weapons, soldiers and special forces to Ukraine is not feminist foreign policy.
Demilitarize the crisis.
Diplomacy and neutrality.

Learn more at https://www.foreignpolicy.ca/ukraine

forces is not feminist foreign policy. We also called on Canada to end weapons exports to Ukraine and to stop military training and exercises under Operation UNIFIER & REASSURANCE.

You can read the public statement here: foreignpolicy.ca/ukraine

Also, there were days of action across the country on January 29th and February 4th on the theme of #StandForPeace and #NoWarWithRussia with events in Victoria, Vancouver, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Waterloo, Montreal, Ottawa, and Cape Breton.





VOW issued a <u>statement</u> on the acts of war and military aggression in Ukraine on February 24th: "VOW urgently calls for a comprehensive ceasefire in the region, for the Government of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to immediately demilitarize and de-escalate the conflict, and to resume multilateral diplomatic negotiations based on the United Nations Charter in order to ensure lasting peace and security in Ukraine, Russia, and Eastern Europe." The statement also highlighted the disproportionate impacts of war on women and girls and the requirement for meaningful participation of women in peace building and conflict prevention.

VOW members joined World Beyond War and other activists for a day of anti-war and anti-NATO rallies on May 7th, an international day of action for peace in Ukraine, with events around the world including in Toronto where VOW Co-Chair Lyn Adamson spoke at the rally.





Coalition Involvement & Collaborations

VOW continued its leadership with the No Fighter Jets Coalition in early 2022, including a <u>parliamentary petition</u> to stop the Trudeau government from spending \$19 billion for 88 fossil-fuel powered fighter jets, the second most expensive procurement in Canadian history. The petition received 1, 367 signatures and was presented in the House of Commons on May 9th.

On April 6, 2022, a coalition of women's, peace, labour, and civil society organizations sent an <u>open letter</u> to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh expressing their united rejection of proposed increases to Canada's military spending toward NATO's 2% of GDP target.

Along with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day Coalition and Échec à la Guerre, VOW initiated a <u>parliamentary petition</u> calling on Canada to break with NATO's nuclear policy and immediately sign and commit to ratifying the TPNW. The petition received 1,428 signatures and was presented in the House of Commons on June 14th.



VOW members participated in the No CANSEC coalition that planned actions at the CANSEC weapons trade show in Ottawa. Hundreds strong, protestors blocked access to all entrances to the event on June 1, 2022 in solidarity with everyone killed and displaced by the weapons sold there.





VOW, together with individual members and organizational members of the Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network, urged people across Canada to rally in th streets for peace, with protests for #CanadaStopArmingSaudi Day of Action in March to end the war in Yemen, against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in June, for the International Day of Peace in September, and the #FundPeaceNotWar Canada Week of Action in October.

The network issued statements for each day of action that are posted online at peaceandjusticenetwork.ca

- #CanadaStopArmingSaudi
- Stop the War, Stop NATO
- International Day of Peace
- #FundPeaceNotWar



End the War in Yemen







VOW and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Canada met with Senator Mobina Jaffer in September and Senator Marilou McPhedran in August as a follow up to joint letters denouncing Canada's increasing militarization.

We discussed our concerns about the rise of military spending in Canada, the federal government sending weapons to Ukraine and prolonging the war, and Canada's failure to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We discussed the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and our position that Canada should withdraw from NATO. We want Canada to join the TPNW, end the war, reduce and re-allocate military spending to social needs and climate action, and to invest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

You can read our letter to Senator Mobina Jaffer <u>here</u> and the letter to Senator McPhedran <u>here</u>.

More Advocacy Highlights:



 VOW initiated an online petition to call on the Canadian government to send an official delegation to observe the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPWN). The petition received over 200 signatures in a week and helped to raise more awareness about Canada's lack of leadership on nuclear disarmament.



- VOW members and supporters participated in various Mother's Day walks for peace, weekend actions to share visual messages and photos for peace honouring of mothers and grandmothers working for peace and connecting with the anti-war roots of Mother's Day.
- Success for Ban the Bomb Ottawa in getting the City of Ottawa to support
 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The group is an official
 ICAN Partner and is supported by VOW. On June 8th, Ottawa City Council
 officially voted unanimously in favour of the TPNW motion. Ottawa joins 17
 other Canadian cities as part of the ICAN Cities Appeal, including Toronto,
 Vancouver and Winnipeg, and by many other cities around the world.
- VOW has hosted a number of Zoom strategy and discussion calls to mobilize VOW members and other peace activists.
- Members joined with WILPF Canada members in a picket and leafleting against the Abbotsford Airshow and a protest against the Toronto International Air Show and Canada Buying the F-35





Thanks to a generous donor, in September we hired Sarah Rohleder as our new part-time Peace Campaign Intern. Working with the guidance of Senior Campaigner and long-time VOW member Tamara Lorincz, Sarah is continuing VOW's work raising public and political support for disarmament issues. Specifically, her efforts will enable VOW to continue to demand that the Canadian government reduce military spending, support a Disarmament Agenda for Canada, and sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. On the occasion of the 8th International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in September, Sarah sent an appeal to Prime Minister Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Joly for Canada to sign the TPNW.



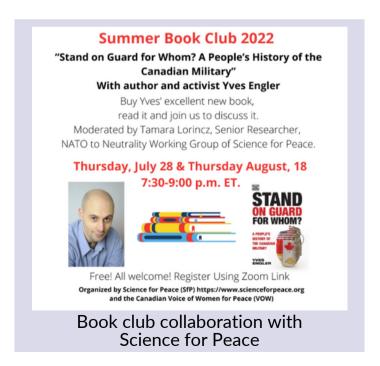
b) PEACE EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Highlights!

Student interns from the Humber College social work program not only assisted us with frequent informative social media posts, they each researched and wrote an article that we published on the VOW blog:

- Mother Earth: a Well-known Time Bomb (a Canadian Women's Perspective), by Aleksandra Statkiewicz, on the importance of climate action and meeting Paris Agreement targets
- Canada's Membership with NATO, and the Problematic Consequences of the Country's Growing Militarism, by Melissa Maccani
- How Does Military Service Affect Mental Health?, by Nicole Kotnjek

From September to December, Anjali Rao, a student intern from the Peace, Conflict and Justice program at the Munk School, University of Toronto, is working with the VOW campaign team.





In January, VOW co-sponsored with Science for Peace a Student Forum Against Nuclear Weapons featuring Green MP Elizabeth May and WILPF's Reaching Critical Will disarmament expert Ray Acheson.

Monthly Newsletter

VOW's monthly e-newsletter is sent to almost 2,000 subscribers with VOW news and actions and a "Signal Boost" section of news from the peace movement to share webinars, conferences, and other events, plus a wide variety of peace resources.





White Poppies for Peace: VOW members organized three actions across Canada on November 11th - in Kjipuktuk/Halifax, Toronto, and Salt Spring Island. NS VOW presented its "Knot Bombs- Piecing Peace Together" banner at its White Peace Poppy Ceremony in the Peace and Friendship Park. Wreaths were placed to remember the many victims of war and violence - civilian casualties, the earth, refugees, PTSD suffering veterans, children. Members of Toronto chapter of Canadian Voice of Women for Peace give out white poppies - and information on how to prevent war - at the busy Yonge & Dundas intersection. VOW members and supporters on Salt Spring Island gathered for a white poppy wreath ceremony. And white poppies were also distributed at COP 26 in Glasgow by Marla and Kasha Slavner on the same day.

VOW has an active social media presence on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Instagram</u> and <u>Twitter</u> that serves educational, awareness-raising and outreach purposes. Thanks to interns, volunteers and staff, we shared news and events and informative posts throughout the past year from Peace Poppies last November to the Global Days of Action on Military Spending in April, through all the advocacy actions and campaigns noted above, to "Cut Military Spending" graphics jointly with WILPF Canada, blog articles from interns, and all our open letters to government representatives. **Be sure to follow and share! @vowpeace**





c) UNITED NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

Every year, VOW participants attend various United Nations events, inperson and remotely. VOW has "consultative status" with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), an NGO accreditation that allows access to ECOSOC and its many subsidiary bodies, the various human rights mechanisms of the UN, as well as special events.

VOW delegations have participated in the annual Commission on the Status of Women at the UN in New York for over 20 years, as well as disarmament conferences and other meetings and events related to our mission. VOW facilitates accreditation and registration for individual delegates who pay their own expenses for in-person participation.

Parallel Event During the 66th UN Commission on the Status of Women

As part of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March, VOW hosted an inspiring discussion on how disarmament can transform our economies forward through diverting funds from carbon intensive weapons to climate change mitigation, regeneration and women's empowerment. Speakers included Sarah Kamau, Rachel Parent and Oyeyinka Oyelowo.

Watch the recording here.





VOW Members at UN Events

Marla and Kasha Slavner and Marney Cuff attended various civil society and UN sessions at the First Meetings of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna, Austria. We called attention to the absence of a Canadian government delegation at this historic conference.

VOW Board Member Oyeyinka Oyelowo participated in the UN Ocean Conference at the end of June in Portugal and <u>prepared a statement</u> expressing VOW's commitment to managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems. "VOW is committed to be part of the effort to ensure that our global community meets the challenge of ensuring that our oceans and its inhabitants, and all who all living nearby, and reliant on this irreplaceable resource, are respected and protected. There is work to be done. And VOW is ready to lead with collaboration."

VOW members also participated in the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference virtually and in New York, August 1st to 26th.







3. AFFILIATIONS & ENDORSEMENTS

Affiliations

- Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network
- Canadian Peace Initiative
- Canadian Pugwash Group
- · Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
- Canadian Commission for UNESCO
- Climate Action Network Canada Climate Fast
- Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space
- Hiroshima Day Coalition Toronto
- International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group
- International Peace Bureau
- No Fighter Jets Coalition
- Nonviolent Peaceforce
- No to NATO Network
- UN Dept. of Global Communications
- UN Economic and Social Council (NY/Vienna/Geneva or Regional)
- Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada
- · World Beyond War
- Voice of Somali Women for Peace

Endorsements

- Open letter to the PM re ongoing weapons sales to Saudi Arabia
- Coalition call for the Canadian government to reduce military spending
- Global Campaign on Military Spending: Give Peace a Budget Campaign
- Nuclear Ban Treaty Collaborative: Statement on the Existential Threat of Nuclear Weapons and on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- CAN-Rac: Letter to the Canadian government re the Coastal Gaslink pipeline and removing RCMP from Indigenous territories
- Pacific Peace Network: Cancel RIMPAC 2022
- ENGO Sign-on letter: Consult the Public on Canada's New Aviation Plan
- Various feminist organizations: Cancelling UN Women's MoU with BlackRock
- Greater Victoria Climate Hub: Prevent Fossil Fuel Catastrophe in the Red Sea
- CAN-Rac in support of Migrant Rights Network: Status for All
- Just Peace Advocates: Submission to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding WSP Operations on the Jerusalem Light Rail Connecting Illegal Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- CODEPINK: Cancellation of the F-35 program in the US, cancellation of training in residential areas, and a reinvestment of F-35 funds into life affirming programs
- CAN-Rac: A Call to the CBC to Inform the Canadian Public of our Climate Crisis
- NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security: Open letter to UN Member States in advance of the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)



4. REGIONAL CHAPTERS

Manitoba

Submitted by Shayne Wong

Twitter: @vowpeace_mb Instagram: @vowpeace.manitoba

The Manitoba chapter of VOW is a newer chapter within the larger VOW organization. It has been working to grow its reach within the Canadian prairies by researching potential organizations and campaigns that the chapter can support both nationally and within the province of Manitoba. The chapter, which is small, has been looking at ways to widen its reach and bring in new potential members to the organization who are interested or working in demilitarization, peace, and security in Canada and around the world.

New Brunswick

Submitted by Brigid Grant

The VOW New Brunswick group has not been active since the Covid 19 restrictions began. Two stalwart members have maintained a skeleton framework: Bo Miedema collecting membership names and dues, and Lucy Dyer forwarding emails like the national Newsletter to those who might have slipped through the cracks in the National records. I know it is this time of year that Bo begins to solicit dues for the new year. When it becomes possible, I feel sure most of us will gather together in person to share our varied views and proposals for actions in a boisterous but civil enthusiasm based on long-standing friendships.

Nova Scotia

Submitted by Sandy Greenberg and kathrin winkler

Facebook: facebook.com/NSVOW

NSVOW Annual Report - November 2021 to October 2022

1. We have an ongoing weekly reading group of Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



- 2. We hosted a White Peace Poppy Ceremony in the Peace and Friendship Park on November 11, 2021. Wreaths were placed to remember the many victims of war and violence civilian casualties, the earth, refugees, PTSD suffering veterans, children. In addition, we displayed our banner commemorating the 38 Yemeni children who were killed in August 2018 by a Lockheed Martin Bomb as they were on a school bus. The banner was also shown at several art galleries later in the year
- 3. We held several "No New Fighter Jets" demonstrations throughout the year, both in front of Halifax MP Andy Fillmore's office and on Citadel Hill, where we unfurled a huge banner.
- 4. We held several public vigils and had several letters to the editor published calling for peace in Ukraine and Yemen, and opposing Lockheed Martin, Fighter Jets, and "small" nuclear reactors, calling for women's voices to be heard.
- 5. We participated in the protest against the National Security Forum held in Halifax
- 6. We participated in the Canadian Pension Plan consultation, calling for CPP to divest from weapons manufacturers, including Lockheed Martin.
- 7. NO TO NATO protest during July1 Canada Day parade
- 8. Hiroshima Day, August 8 Engaged public, handed out white peace poppies Grand Parade, Halifax.
- 9. KNOT BOMBS Banner: The banner was shared with Yemeni women at Ummah Mosque with a moving evening of sharing and discussion. Our Muslim sisters told their stories, gave us beautiful calligraphy of each of our names an roses. They shared that they did not believe anyone cared ...and it meant so much to know their story is heard.
- 10. GDAMS: Global Day of Action against Military SPending we displayed the banner in front of Central Library, Halifax and handed out over 100 peace poppies. Postcards were available with labels for Minister Anita Anand and PM Trudeau.
- 11. We also suffered the devastating loss of our VOW sister, Joan Smith. We will conclude this report with our tribute to Joan:



Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace expresses sorrow at the shattering news that one of our own, Joan Smith, has left us so suddenly. Joanie loved to bring the heartbeat of her drumming and the strength of traditional songs to guide our presence in countless rallies, gatherings, vigils, and actions. Joan was often the first voice - the voice to gather us in and the voice to give the land acknowledgement, always bringing home the importance of what unceded and traditional land means to all of us. Joan was often the last voice- sending us to the rest of our daily lives after rallying in hope for justice and peace.

Joan did not tolerate the forces that tear apart our world, because she was a mender, a patcher, a creative force whether it came to a clear view or an intricate creation of cloth. She reminded us that we, both Indigenous and settlers, share Mi'kma'ki, and that it is up to us to protect it.

She contributed her seamstress skills to the VOW peace banner commemorating the Yemini children killed by a Lockheed Martin bomb, as well as to our fabric shrouds which covered cannons around HRM. She helped place a VOW banner on Citadel hill, declaring "No New Fighter Jets", and spoke out for redirecting those billions of dollars to "health care, education, just recovery, liveable wages, green jobs, universal daycare", and everything else we need to make our country and our world safe for children and us all. Joan walked the walk of peace smoothing the way with love and kindness for all of us in her wake. We will listen closely to hear her songs as the winds of change surround us all.





5. ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Staff Updates

After more than 3 years of dedication to VOW and advocacy and administrative leadership, Vanessa Lanteigne left her 20-hour per week position as National Coordinator in the spring of 2022 to pursue graduate studies abroad.

Anne Carbert stepped in as Administrative Coordinator working remotely from Central Ontario for 16 hours per week with a focus on administrative systems, operations, and communications. And Linda Feldy has been VOW's Toronto office volunteer since the spring, primarily checking mail, receiving cheques for membership contributions and donations, and updating member information.

New Contact Database & E-News Platform

Building on changes made last year, we continue to improve how we are keeping records of VOW's members, donors and supporters. After exploring options for more efficient systems, we will soon have a new platform for contact relationship management that will more effectively and affordably combine the functions of contact management, e-newsletter creation, and event management to replace multiple platforms VOW has been using. The new system includes automated functions to simplify ongoing administration.

Communications

<u>VOW's website</u> features blog postings that are updated frequently with news, campaigns, calls to action, coalition events photos and more.

Our monthly e-newsletter goes out to almost 2,000 subscribers and we have active social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share our news and campaigns and spread the message of peace. VOW is also on LinkedIn where we post job openings and skilled volunteer requests.



VOW's Website: vowpeace.org



6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The contributions of members, donors, board members, volunteers, student interns, staff, and partners are essential for VOW's work. We thank all of you who have dedicated your time and energy for peace.

Board of Directors 2021-22

- Lyn Adamson, Co-Chair
- Ainun Afroza
- Charlotte Akin
- Janis Alton
- Charlotte Sheasby-Coleman
- Brigid Grant

- Hannah Hadikin, Co-Chair
- Violette Khammad
- Catherine Lathwell, Treasurer
- Oyeyinka Oyelowo
- Marla Slavner
- Rana Zaman

Staff

- Vanessa Lanteigne, National Coordinator (to April 2022)
- Anne Carbert, Administrative Coordinator
- Tamara Lorincz, Senior Researcher & Campaigner
- Sarah Rohleder, Peace Campaign Intern

VOW National Volunteers

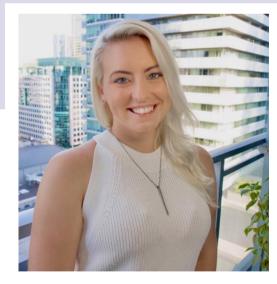
- Linda Feldy, Assisting with office & membership tasks
- Anjali Rao, Student Intern, University of Toronto
- Nicole Kotnjek, Melissa Maccani and Aleksandra Statkiewicz, Student Interns, Humber College

Chapter Coordinators

- Brigid Grant, New Brunswick
- Sandy Greenberg, Nova Scotia
- Shayne Wong, Manitoba

In the spring, VOW bid a very fond adieu to the out-going National Coordinator Vanessa Lanteigne as she set off for exciting peace studies in Sweden.

Our gratitude for Vanessa's many skills and dedication run deep. Her tireless drive and advocacy on our behalf to advance nuclear disarmament,



demilitarization, and awareness of the dangers of reliance on fossil fuels has strengthened our long-standing efforts to build a better world. Our appreciation is perhaps summed up in the words of one of our board members. "You will be loved and remembered for your sincerity, creativity and dedication." And from another: "You will be remembered as a tireless and inspiring campaigner on the right side of history." We wish Vanessa the very best in her peace studies and look forward to those times when our peace paths combine again.

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace

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