



Canadian Voice of
Women for Peace
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Women's International
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October 31, 2022

Hon. Steven Guilbeault, MP
House of Commons *
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1A 0A6

Re: Our concerns about carbon-intensive military procurement and rising military expenditures in the midst of a climate emergency.

Our call for ending the war, cutting military spending for climate finance, demilitarization for decarbonization and gender-responsive climate action.

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

On the eve of the 27th meeting of Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom Canada (WILPF), are jointly writing this open letter to you about our concerns about Canada's rising carbon emissions and military spending in this worsening climate emergency. We are advocating for demilitarization for decarbonization, cutting military spending for climate financing, and peace for climate justice.

CANADIAN ACTIVISTS AT COP 27 & FEMINIST CLIMATE JUSTICE - GENDER RESPONSIVE CLIMATE ACTION

As feminist peace organizations, VOW and WILPF support national and global efforts to advance feminist climate justice, gender responsive climate action and gender mainstreaming in all climate policies and programs. We also want to inform you that some of our members will be attending COP 27 in Egypt as part of official civil society organizations. We are affiliated with the Climate Action Network Canada and the Women Gender Constituency (WGC). WGC's research shows that the climate crisis is exacerbating poverty and gender inequality. Women and girls, especially Indigenous and people of colour in the Global South, are at the greatest disadvantage and most vulnerable.

VOW and WILPF stand in solidarity with the more than 150 African Women and Girls organizations and their demands that they are bringing to COP 27: women's and youth leadership in climate processes, an equitable energy transition, climate finance, land rights, just technology, and intersectionality and interlinkages across development work streams. The WGC has listed these demands on their web site: <https://womengenderclimate.org/press-release-more-than-150-african-women-and-girls-launch-demands-ahead-of-un-climate-conference-cop27-in-egypt/>

We are aware that last October the federal government submitted to the UNFCCC, Canada's latest Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and Its Gender Action Plan for Climate Policy. However, we would like to point out that the federal government's increasing carbon-intensive military procurement and military spending are impeding the full implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

MILITARY EXPENDITURES DIVERT PUBLIC FUNDS AWAY FROM CLIMATE ACTION

As well, VOW and WILPF are concerned that the federal government spends disproportionately more on militarism than on climate action. The Department of National Defence (DND) has the largest budget among all federal departments and agencies. According to the *Public Accounts of Canada*, the annual budget for DND was \$28 billion, which accounts for 30% of all federal departmental spending. The federal government also announced \$78 billion for NORAD modernization and will be spending \$77 billion for the new fossil fuel-powered F-35 fighter jets and over \$306 billion for the fossil fuel-powered warships. Last year, the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* ranked Canada 13th highest in the world for military spending. By contrast, the budget for the Department of Environment and Climate Change was just over \$2 billion.

We are aware that Canada is co-chairing with Germany a UN working group on climate financing. However, we remain troubled that Canada has failed to adequately invest in the UN Green Climate Fund to help developing countries adapt to the climate crisis. We note that the federal government announced a climate finance commitment of \$5 billion over the next five years for countries in the Global South is equivalent to the price tag for Canada's new armed drones, which may be used for air strikes in those countries. We want the federal government to reduce military spending and re-allocate it to the climate emergency and reconciliation with First Nations communities. At COP 27, we will be joining other civil society groups to call for the cutting of the military budget for climate finance including for adaptation and loss and damage.

MILITARY EMISSIONS ARE LARGEST SOURCE OF EMISSIONS IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

VOW and WILPF also want to bring to your attention that among all federal departments and agencies, it is the military that has the biggest carbon *footprint*. DND including the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) consumes the most fossil fuel and is the largest emitter of GHGs. Carbon emissions from the military account for over 61% of all emissions by the federal government. Yet, military emission reductions are absent from Canada's latest Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) because of the National Safety and Security exemption. As well, they are ignored in the federal government's 2020 plan, *A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*, and from the 2021 report, *Canada's Climate Actions for A Healthy Environment and A Healthy Economy*.

DND and the CAF require a steady flow of fossil fuel. DND's energy mix is comprised predominantly of aviation fuel, diesel fuel, natural gas, gasoline and heavy fuel oil to power their vehicles and operations. Yet, military vehicles like fighter jets, tanks and warships are notoriously energy inefficient, have long life cycles and have locked-in energy platforms that cannot be readily replaced by renewable energy. These vehicles are very harmful to the climate, the natural environment and to people. Burning fossil fuel for fighter jets to bomb other countries is unethical and antithetical to climate justice, so too is net-zero for national defence, which simply allows business-as-usual, carbon-intensive militarism. We cannot plant trees to offset the emissions of war machines; we have to stop the wars. Thus, VOW and WILPF are calling on your government to cancel the

planned procurement of new weapons systems and to support a ceasefire and negotiations to end the wars in Ukraine, Yemen and elsewhere.

CANADA MUST DEMILITARIZE TO DECARBONIZE

As you know, the UN just released its latest *Emissions Gap* report. *Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Closing Window – Climate crisis* finds that the international community is falling far short of the Paris goals, with no credible pathway to 1.5°C in place. The report calls for a rapid transformation of society and states that “only an urgent system-wide transformation can avoid climate disaster.”

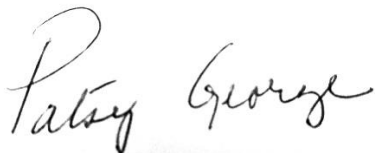
Thus, VOW and WILPF believe that it is irresponsible for the federal government to buy fossil fuel-powered weapons of war like fighter jets and warships that lock us into decades of carbon-intensive militarism and impede decarbonization. We are also opposed the militarization of the Arctic through NORAD. The federal government has announced \$78 billion for NORAD modernization. The government will build more environmentally-destructive military infrastructure in the north, like runways, roads and installations for the military. Yet, the north is the fastest warming region of the country, is a fragile ecosystem and is the home of many Indigenous communities that are in need of greater social investment. We remind the federal government that there has been a long legacy of contamination from the DEW line across the north that was never fully remediated.

VOW and WILPF do not support the greening of military installations or weapons systems or making war more “environmentally friendly.” We need to demilitarize national security systems and shift away from armed force and the idea of “adversaries” to cooperation among all countries. We need to cooperate with Russia and China on the climate emergency and other global challenges.

Finally, we know that a climate-safe and sustainable future is only possible by ending war, stopping all fossil fuel and caring for the earth and each other. Please cancel your government’s plans to buy new fighter jets and build new warships. Please stop exporting arms to Ukraine and support a ceasefire and negotiations to end the war. Please cut military spending and invest in climate financing. Please support peace for climate justice and a gender-responsive climate action that centres Indigenous reconciliation and the Global South.

We look forward to your reply. We would also welcome an opportunity to meet with you. We can also be reached at info@vowpeace.org or by phone: 416-603-7915.

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: wilpfcanda.ca

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CUT MILITARY SPENDING \$

SINCE 2014, CANADIAN MILITARY SPENDING HAS INCREASED 75% TO \$35 BILLION PER YEAR

LET'S FUND:

- CARE ECONOMY
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- CLIMATE ACTION
- GREEN JOBS
- INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

SOURCE: NATO DEFENCE EXPENDITURES REPORT 2022: WWW.NATO.INT

WILPF Canada
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom Canada
www.wilpfcanda.ca

DECOLONIZE
DEMILITARIZE
DECARBONIZE
DECOLONIZE