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JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF CANADA

April 2023

Introduction

This submission presents the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Canada's and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace's (VOW) concerns and recommendations relating to the upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Canada (44th session, November 6-17, 2023).

I. Rising military spending diverts public funds and undermines economic and social rights

Canada's rising military spending is diverting public resources away from urgent social programs that are needed to improve the standard of living of the population as required by the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Article 11 (1). Canadian military spending is comprised of funding for the Department of National Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Since 2014, Canada's military spending has increased by 70% to \$35 billion annually, which is 1.2% of GDP according to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) latest *Defence Expenditures* report.¹ At this level of spending, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has ranked Canada as 13th highest in the world according its report *Trends in World Military Spending*.² NATO's demand that allies meet or exceed the 2% GDP target and Canada's defence policy are the main drivers of Canada's ever increasing military expenditures.

In 2017, the Canadian government released its defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (SSE).³ It is a plan to spend over \$553 billion on the military over the next 20 years to buy new weapons systems like fighter jets, armed drones and attack helicopters, build new warships, and recruit more soldiers to maintain "high-end warfighting." SSE is heavily influenced by Canada's membership in NATO, the U.S.-led nuclear-armed military alliance, and in the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the partnership with the U.S. on continental defence.

¹ NATO Defence Expenditures report, 2022: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220627-def-exp-2022-en.pdf

² SIPRI, Trends in World Military Expenditures: https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/fs_2204_milex_2021_0.pdf

³ Canada, 2017, Strong Secure Engaged, Defence Policy: <http://dgpapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>

In Budget 2023, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland announced an additional \$55 billion increase to the defence budget to meet Canada's NATO and NORAD commitments over the next twenty years.⁴ This includes a \$19 billion deal for fossil fuel powered F-35 fighter jets, \$6.3 billion will be for new advanced air-to-air missiles for the fighter jets, and \$7 billion for new military infrastructure for the fighter jet fleet. Budget 2023 states,

As a result of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* and subsequent funding increases, including funding for NORAD modernization and continental defence announced in June 2022, DND's annual budget is expected to more than double over ten years, from \$18.6 billion in 2016-17 to \$39.7 billion in 2026-27 on a cash basis (emphasis added).⁵

According to the *Public Accounts of Canada* for 2022, the budget for the Department of National Defence last year was \$29 billion. By contrast, Canada only spent only \$2.9 billion for the Department of Global Affairs, \$2 billion for the Department of Environment and Climate Change, and \$52 million for the Department of Women and Gender Equality.⁶

II. Military spending and NORAD militarization harming Indigenous communities

In Budget 2023, the Canadian government announced \$38.6 billion over 20 years to invest in the modernization of NORAD, which means new military infrastructure in the northern territories and on Air Force bases across the country. NORAD modernization will lead to the upgrading of radar sites across the north, which were severely contaminated in the past. As well, many military bases like CFB Cold Lake in Alberta and CFB Goose Bay, were established on land illegally expropriated from Indigenous communities by the federal government. However, several Indigenous reserves around the bases have unsafe housing and unpaved roads. In Nunavut, many Indigenous live in dilapidated housing and are suffering from poverty and health issues. Please refer to this important 2020 report, *Sick of Waiting: A Report on Nunavut's Housing Crisis*, by former Member of Parliament for Nunavut Mumilaaq Qaqqaq.⁷ Qaqqaq travelled to many communities and documented with photos the unsafe housing and poverty experienced the Indigenous people. She wrote, "The Nunavut Housing Corporation is severely underfunded by the federal government. The federal government has a responsibility to fund housing in an adequate way, with appropriate materials for the North. Adequate housing is the least this government can do after years of neglect, oppression and colonization." Along with the Indigenous housing crisis, there is also greater homelessness and tent encampments across Canada. The Canadian government is overspending for the military and underspending for affordable housing, health care and other social welfare programs.

III. Increase Arms Exports and Lack of Diplomacy and Disarmament

⁴ Canada, Budget 2023: <https://www.budget.canada.ca/2023/pdf/budget-2023-en.pdf>

⁵ Canada, Budget 2023: <https://www.budget.canada.ca/2023/pdf/budget-2023-en.pdf> (p. 163)

⁶ Public Accounts of Canada, 2022, Volume II, Table 2A: <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/2022/vol2/s1/rcec-reet-eng.html>

⁷ Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, "Sick of Waiting: A Report on Nunavut's Housing Crisis," <https://www.aptnnews.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Qaqqaq.HousingReport.2021-1.pdf>

Canadian arms exports undermine human rights and harm people in other countries. In 2021, the value of Canadian arms transfers increased by almost 30% to approximately \$2.7 billion, according to Global Affairs Canada's latest report on *The Exports on Military Goods*.⁸ SIPRI ranked Canada 17th highest in the world for arms transfers.⁹ Canada exports weapons to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel among many other countries despite overwhelming evidence that they have been used in attacks amounting to serious violations of international humanitarian law.¹⁰ WILPF's 2020 submission, *The impact of Canada's arms transfers on children's rights*, described the impact of Canadian weapons transfers on children's human rights in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Nigeria and the Philippines. The report explained the legal loopholes and transparency concerns concerning Canadian weapons manufacturers operating in other countries, which continue today.¹¹ Though Canada is a party to the *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT), it is not following the requirements of the treaty in relation to the protection of human rights.

In addition, from 2017, Canada began supplying ammunition and military equipment to the Ukrainian security forces that intensified the civil unrest in the country undermining the Minsk Agreements. Over the past year, Canada has sent over \$1.5 billion worth of shells, sniper rifles, machine guns, howitzer artillery guns, rocket launchers, hand grenades, missiles, an advanced missile system and tanks to the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). Tens of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers have been injured and killed, thousands of civilians have been injured and killed, and millions of Ukrainians are displaced and impoverished especially women and children. Canada has not established any independent oversight of the arms that it is transferring to Ukraine, which is required under the ATT. There also are many distressing reports that the small arms coming into Ukraine are being used in cases of domestic violence.¹² Moreover, Canada has not called for a ceasefire and negotiations to end the conflict.

III. Support of NATO's Nuclear Deterrence and Procurement of Dual Capable F-35 Fighter Jets

In 2017, Canada boycotted the negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It also refused to attend and observe the First Meeting of the Parties of the TPNW last year in Vienna. The Canada government has stated that it refuses to join the TPNW, because of membership in NATO that relies on a dangerous nuclear deterrence. Within NATO, Canada is part of the Nuclear

⁸ Global Affairs Canada (2021) Exports of Military Goods, released May 2022: https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/controls-controles/reports-rapports/military_goods-2021-marchandises_militaires-en.pdf

⁹ SIPRI, Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2022: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303_at_fact_sheet_2022_v2.pdf

¹⁰ Amnesty International and Project Ploughshares (2021) "No Credible Evidence": Canada's flawed analysis of arms exports to Saudi Arabia": https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancement/sites/default/files/uploads/files/nocredibleevidence_en.pdf

¹¹ WILPF, *The impact of Canada's arms transfers on children's rights*, submission to the 87th pre-sessional working group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/WILPF_CRC_June2020.pdf

¹² Jessie Williams (2023) "'This War Made Him a Monster.' Ukrainian Women Fear the Return of Their Partners," Time: <https://time.com/6261977/ukraine-women-domestic-violence/>

Planning Group. Canada is the world's second largest producer of uranium and a supplier of uranium to the United States.¹³

In January of this year, Canada announced that it would buy 88 Lockheed Martin F-35 joint strike fighter jets for \$19 billion. Yet, the F-35 is a dual-capable fighter jet that is designed to carry the B61-12 tactical thermonuclear weapon. The F-35 fighter jets are an integral component of the U.S. nuclear architecture according to the 2022 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review.¹⁴ With Canada's procurement of these F-35 fighter jets and the possibility of these warplanes carrying nuclear weapons for NATO operations, Canada may be in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT prohibits the transfer of nuclear weapons and requires progress on nuclear disarmament that the F-35s do not do.¹⁵

IV. Failure to Fully Implement Women Peace Security Agenda

Rising military spending and arms transfers impede Canada's implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Canada has failed to ensure women's meaningful participation and has failed to promote women's leadership for conflict prevention, mediation and post-conflict recovery. Canada's Foreign Minister has not meet with women's peace groups since 2017 and has never replied to any of our letters. More seriously, before Russia's invasion on February 24, 2022, Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly also refused to meet with her Russian counterpart and discuss Russia's draft negotiation plan of December 2021 that could have prevented this war.

Instead of conflict prevention, Canada has deployed armed force in other countries with disastrous results. From 2002-2014, the Canadian military was engaged in NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan where CAF soldiers turned detainees over to torture and killed civilians including children. The Canadian military covertly participated in the illegal United States-led war of aggression against Iraq from 2003. In 2011, Canada commanded the NATO bombing of Libya that caused a devastating civil conflict and a humanitarian crisis with thousands of people fleeing the country and drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. With the US coalition, Canada conducted thousands of airstrikes against Syria and Iraq destroying infrastructure and killing people from 2014-2016. There has been no accountability or reparations for the human rights violations caused by Canada's military interventions abroad.

Furthermore, women were never tasked to prevent or resolve these violent conflicts in which the Canadian government and military were directly involved even though this was required by Resolution 1325. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria remain in crisis and the lives of women and girls were made

¹³ Government of Canada, Canada and Uranium, <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy/energy-sources-distribution/uranium-nuclear-energy/uranium-canada/about-uranium/7695>

¹⁴ United States (2022) 2022 Nuclear Posture Review:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/uploads.fas.org/2022/10/27113658/2022-Nuclear-Posture-Review.pdf>

¹⁵ Tamara Lorincz (2022) *Soaring: The Harms and Risks of Fighter Jets and Why Canada Must Not Buy a New Fleet*:

https://wilpfcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/03-Harms-of-Fighter-Jets-Report_Final.pdf

much worse by these interventions. Moreover, there is no mention of these military interventions and the harm done in Canada's two National Action Plans (NAP) for Women, Peace and Security.¹⁶

V. Climate Crisis

The IPCC's 6th Synthesis report released in March urgently explains that global warming is worsening and that countries must rapidly reduce emissions for near term climate action to keep warming below the 1.5°C Paris target.¹⁷ However, according to Climate Action Tracker, Canada's carbon reduction plan is "highly insufficient" and the country is not on track to meet its Paris Agreement pledge.¹⁸ The Office of the Auditor General of Canada found that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have increased by 20% since 1990 to over 730 megatonnes/per year in 2021.¹⁹ Canada has failed to meet every climate target set by the United Nations over the past three decades.

Among all federal departments and agencies, it is the military that has the biggest carbon footprint. The Department of National Defence 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 reports on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the federal GHG reduction plans. Canada must demilitarize for decarbonization. The federal government must reduce and re-allocate military spending to the climate emergency, climate financing and the poverty crisis. The government must not buy new costly, carbon-intensive weapons systems like fighter jets and tanks, and instead invest in a green, care economy and a just transition.

Recommendations for the Government of Canada

1. Undertake a gender-sensitive and gender-responsive analysis of the impacts of increasing the military budget, in consultation with women's organizations in Canada. Conduct a parliamentary inquiry including with public consultations on military spending.
2. Reduce and re-allocate military spending to urgent social program, environmental protection and climate action, thereby ensuring promoting social cohesion and gender equality and women and girls' human rights.
3. Implement the Women Peace and Security agenda commitments nationally and internationally with appropriate infrastructure, such as establishing an Ambassador for Disarmament, Department of Peace and a Minister of Peace.
4. Meet with Canadian women's peace organizations and respond to their written communications.

¹⁶ Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/cnap_wps-pnac_fps.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.154535804.55827995.1680388845-88221254.1662147819

¹⁷ IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers: https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syр/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

¹⁸ Climate Tracker, Canada: <https://climateactiontracker.org/>

¹⁹ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Climate Change: https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/att__e_43947.html

5. Develop an Agenda for Peace and Disarmament in consultation with women's group and the public. Invest in peace education, peace research, peacebuilding programs and disarmament nationally and internationally.
6. Comply with the Arms Trade Treaty and stop sending weapons to Ukraine and to other countries known for human rights violations, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, and the crime of apartheid, Israel. Conduct and make public transparent gendered impact assessments of arms transfers. Support ceasefires and negotiated resolutions to conflict.
7. Join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, work with other states parties to agree on and implement a plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons as required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and cancel the F-35 procurement.
8. Protect those who are most affected by the impact of climate change and include local and Indigenous knowledge in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.
9. Demilitarize to rapidly decarbonize to meet the Paris Agreement commitments.
10. Cancel the procurement of carbon-intensive weapons systems and invest in a green economy and a just transition.

ABOUT

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

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>