

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Minister Anand,

Please find below a joint letter from Canadian civil society organizations regarding the expiration of the New START Treaty and recommendations for strengthening Canada's diplomatic and preventive security capacity.

This coalition reflects a broad consensus among organizations representing thousands of Canadian leaders across fields including medicine, academia, gender equity, youth leadership, education, and related sectors.

Please confirm receipt of this letter at your earliest convenience.

**Joint Letter Re: New START Treaty Expiration and Strengthening Canada's Diplomacy and Disarmament**

**February 5th, 2026**

**Ottawa, Ontario**

To: the Honourable Prime Minister Carney and Honourable Minister Anand

Cc: Honourable Minister McGinty

At Davos this year, the message was clear: the world has entered a period of rupture. Great power rivalry is intensifying, trust in multilateral institutions is eroding, and the assumptions that once underpinned international security no longer hold. Naming that reality is critical, taking concrete steps to address it is vital.

Today, the New START Treaty expires, the last remaining agreement placing verifiable limits on the world's largest nuclear arsenals. For the first time in decades, there will be no binding constraints on the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and Russia.

Canada lies between the world's two largest nuclear powers at a time where arms control is absent and nuclear competition is accelerating without limits. At the same time, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) faces budget cuts that weaken the very diplomatic and preventive tools needed to manage this moment. Historically, Canadian diplomatic forces played a constructive role in encouraging dialogue on treaties such as New START, demonstrating that sustained diplomatic investment can help reduce nuclear danger.

Canada is deepening an existing imbalance between militarism and diplomacy. As defence spending and hard security accelerates, Canada is quietly hollowing out the diplomatic and preventive tools that actually reduce long-term insecurity: disarmament expertise, arms control diplomacy, sanctions implementation and enforcement capacity, feminist peace and security analysis, and meaningful engagement and partnerships with civil society.

In an environment of collapsing arms control, heightened mistrust, and accelerating gender regression, reducing diplomatic and preventive capacity does not make Canada safer. It leaves Canada more exposed, less able to anticipate crises, shape international rules, or exercise influence when it matters most. When preventative measures are sidelined, military spending ends up replacing strategy rather than supporting it. The result is a security posture that is more costly, less effective and more about appearances than results.

We acknowledge that the federal budget has been finalized. The question now is not whether resources exist, but how they are prioritized and aligned with Canada's security and diplomatic needs. Within GAC, this means making deliberate choices to protect and strengthen disarmament, arms control, sanctions implementation and monitoring, and feminist peace and security capacity. As defence budgets grow, there is a strong case for allocating a modest portion of those resources to the diplomatic and preventive work that makes military spending effective, legitimate, and sustainable.

This could include:

- prioritizing disarmament and non-proliferation capacity within existing GAC resources and human resources;
- allocating a share of National Defence funding to diplomacy, arms control, and risk-reduction expertise housed within GAC;
- strengthening Canada's multilateral peace and disarmament commitments by increasing diplomatic and financial investment in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty and engagement with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;
- supporting civil society partnerships for disarmament education, prevention, and international engagement.

Prevention is not only more humane, it is more financially prudent. Diplomacy, disarmament education, and inclusive peacebuilding cost a fraction of what Canada is prepared to spend on military capacity.

If this government is serious about adapting to today's global realities, it must ensure that rising defence spending is matched by sustained investment in diplomacy, disarmament, and prevention, through clear prioritization within Global Affairs Canada and greater integration across departments.

Canada has a choice in how we invest. We can pour more resources into arms, risking escalation or focus on thoughtful, long-term safeguards to protect national and international security.

Signed,

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace

Disability Rights and Disarmament Initiative, Cape Breton University

Dr. Erika Simpson, President, Canadian Peace Research Association, Western University

Dr. Denise Koh, Public and Occupational Health specialist, Founder MedResRx, Member Women's Peace and Security Network-Canada, WPS Committee Chair (FMWC)

Federation of Medical Women of Canada

Group of 78

Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada

MedResRx

Mines Action Canada

Pax Christi

Project Ploughshares

Science for Peace

Women's International League of Peace and Freedom Canada

Youth Nuclear Peace Summit