



Canadian Voice of
Women for Peace
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The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

July 28, 2022

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

Dear Minister Joly,

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 related to Canadian foreign policy and are requesting a meeting with you.

As you may 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, the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, 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 and special forces 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.

In relation to the war in Ukraine, we want bring to your attention the serious situation that independent Canadian journalist Eva Bartlett who has been reporting from Ukraine, Donbass and Russia has been put on a

Ukrainian “kill” / “undesirables” list, please see the screenshot at the end of this letter. Many journalists on this kill list have been assassinated in the country. We are asking that you condemn this publicly and let the Government of Ukraine know that Canada denounces this. We appreciate that since you have become Minister of Foreign Affairs, you have publicly expressed support for freedom of the media, independent media and the protection of journalists. This must apply to all Canadian journalists working in other countries. *Please see this article: “Journalists and leftists are targets on new Ukraine ‘undesirables’ hit list” <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/journalists-and-leftists-are-targets-on-new-ukraine-undesirables-hit-list/> Eva’s web site and contact information is here: <https://ingaza.wordpress.com/page/4/> She stated, “I’m on a ‘hit list’ Kiev allows to silence dissent & journalism. That’s all you need to know about Ukrainian ‘democracy’.” We would like to know what you can do to protect Canadian journalists and all journalists covering the war in Ukraine.

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 the 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 that nuclear weapons must be abolished for global security. We call on the federal government to sign and ratify the TPNW and show strong leadership for disarmament at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review conference in August.

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 would like the federal government to do a study on the opportunity costs of investing in the military and new fighter jets instead of spending in federal social and environmental programs.

Fourth, we are troubled to learn that Canada's arms exports increased by \$800 million to \$2.7 billion last year, as detailed in Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) new report, *Exports of Military Goods 2021*. The GAC report shows that Canada exported \$1.7 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia, \$54 million to Ukraine and many other countries in 2021. However, we know that arms exports are much higher, because Canada does not disclose the arms exports to the United States. Nevertheless, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) annual report, *Trends in Arms Transfers 2021*, Canada is ranked 17th highest in the world for the export of the weapons. Our organizations believe that the arms trade causes more insecurity and conflict in the world. We want Canada to stop selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and other countries. We would like to bring to your attention the UN's Agenda for Disarmament and that Canada has international obligations for arms control and disarmament. Canada does not have a dedicated Ambassador for Disarmament or a strategy for disarmament.

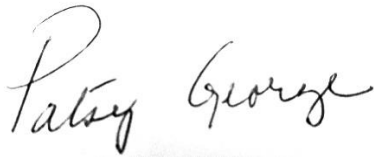
Fifth, we are concerned that peacekeeping and peace support operations through the United Nations has not been a priority for the federal government for many years. According to the United Nations' Peacekeeping office's latest ranking on country contributions, Canada is currently ranked 70th in the world 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 Latvia. Defence Minister Anand announced that Canada would be sending even more troops to Eastern Europe even though this escalates the crisis in the region. We want Canada to be a leader in peace, peacekeeping and disarmament not provocative military operations. We would also like the federal government to conduct a study on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and disarmament.

Finally, we are wondering about the state of Canada's feminist foreign policy. Our organizations are part of the Women Peace and Security Network Canada. We participated in consultations on feminist foreign policy more than a year ago, but the federal government still has not released a statement. As well, we are concerned that Canadians have not had an opportunity to define Canada's foreign policy and instead it is being influenced by NATO and the U.S. We are opposed to NATO and believe that it is antithetical to a feminist foreign policy. We want Canada have an independent foreign policy that is based on diplomacy, disarmament, sustainable development and peace. We do not want more divisions between the West and the East, hostilities with Russia and China, and a new Cold War. The world needs international cooperation to deal with the climate emergency

and to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We are appealing to you to end the war in Ukraine and to work within the UN System for the common security of all countries.

We would like to discuss these aforementioned issues with you. 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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Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2022), *Trends in Arms Transfers 2021*: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/fs_2203_at_2021.pdf

United Nations (2022) *Uniformed Personnel Contributing Countries by Ranking*, United Nations Peacekeeping, April 2022: 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*: https://wilpfcanda.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/03-Harms-of-Fighter-Jets-Report_Final.pdf

EVA BARTLETT:

The image shows a profile page for Eva Bartlett. At the top left is a portrait of her. To the right of the portrait, her personal information is listed: Date of birth: 06/14/1977, Country: Canada, Address: Ontario. Below this is a row of four circular logos with the text "PRO SONO PUBLICO". The main body of the page contains several lines of text, some of which are redacted with a black box. A red rectangular box highlights the following text: "Participant of the so-called 'International Conference 'Evidence of mass war crimes of the Armed forces and national units of Ukraine'', 21.04.2022 in the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation." Below this, there is a "Place of work" field listing "Journalist (Canada)" and "Sources" with a URL. There are also social media-style tags: "#rossprope", "#RussiaInvadedUkraine", and "#RussiaTerrorizm". At the bottom, there are two lines of text: "Deliberate violation of the State Border of Ukraine in order to enter the Crimea occupied by the Russian occupiers." and "Deliberate violation of the state border of Ukraine in [redacted] infiltrate the occupied territory by Russian-terrorist".