



Canadian Voice of
Women for Peace
(VOW)
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Women's International
League for Peace &
Freedom (WILPF) Canada
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May 21, 2024

R. Hon. Mary Simon, O.C.
Governor General of Canada
Office of the Governor General
Rideau Hall
1 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A1

Re: JOINT LETTER: URGENT: Request for brief in-person meeting between May 29-31 in Ottawa

Dear Governor General Simon,

We, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom Canada (WILPF), are writing to inform you of our **"On to Ottawa Peace Caravan"** that is under way this month. Women from coast-to-coast will be converging on the capital on May 27 for a number of important events to promote a path of peace for Canada. We will be in Ottawa and we are urgently asking to have an in-person meeting with you at your convenience between May 29-31.

We have organized this women's peace caravan because we are extremely concerned about the rise of militarism and military spending in Canada. Under the new federal budget, the Department of National Defence's annual budget will increase from \$33 billion to \$49.5 billion by 2030, which is the crucial period that Canada should be decarbonizing to meet the Paris Agreement target on global warming and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Canada will be investing new fossil-powered weapons systems like fighter jets, tactical helicopters, armed drones, tanks, missile systems and much more. We want the federal government to reduce military spending and invest in desperately needed social and environmental programs, such as housing, health care, education, climate action and foreign aid.

As well, we are especially concerned about the new defence policy update, *Our North, Strong and Free*, and the plan to militarize the Arctic with a \$38.6 billion investment in NORAD modernization. In 1989, you wrote an important article entitled "Toward and Arctic Zone of Peace: An Inuit Perspective," which is a perspective that is urgently needed now. We have enclosed with this letter an article written by one of our members "New defence update and federal budget recklessly put Canada on a warpath" and our handout for the caravan "Put Canada on a path to peace." We would like to discuss these issues with you.

We are also concerned about and see the connection between the violence against Indigenous peoples by the RCMP at home and the violence of our military abroad. We are also calling for Canada to respect Indigenous land defenders and waterkeepers and protect their territory. We want Canada to help end the war in Ukraine, Israel's genocide in Gaza, institute an arms embargo and stop arms exports. Canada's support for war and genocide and exports of weapons defies the country's commitment to the United Nations Charter, the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and the 2019 Arctic and Northern Policy Framework in which the Inuit said that they wanted the Arctic to be protected for peace and cooperation.

Canada should be using diplomacy, conflict resolution, disarmament, international law and peacebuilding with all countries including Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela and North Korea to reduce tension and conflict. Canada should take all measures to stop Israel's genocide against the Palestinians. Canada should also support negotiations to end the NATO-Ukraine-Russia war. We do not want a new Cold War or a global war. VOW and WILPF-Canada want the federal government to **demilitarize, decarbonize and decolonize** for a peaceful, just and sustainable future.



More information about the peace caravan and events in Ottawa are at the end of this letter. We have also enclosed our flyer "Put Canada on a Path to Peace" and an article written by one of our members and published in several newspapers in the country "New defence update and federal budget recklessly put Canada on a warpath". Canada should be a country of peace not war and militarism.

Finally, we really hope to hear from you and to meet you briefly in Ottawa at your convenience. We would like to inform you that we have written over 40 letters to the Minister of Foreign Affairs over nine years requesting a meeting and we have not received a reply or a meeting. We would very much like to meet with you in Ottawa next week or online at a later date. We can be reached by email info@vowpeace.org or by phone: 416-603-7915 (Tamara Lorincz's cell is 226-505-9469 and she can help set up a meeting and will be in Ottawa as well).

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)

Encl. article "New defence update and federal budget recklessly put Canada on a warpath" and flyer "Put Canada on a path to peace"

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.

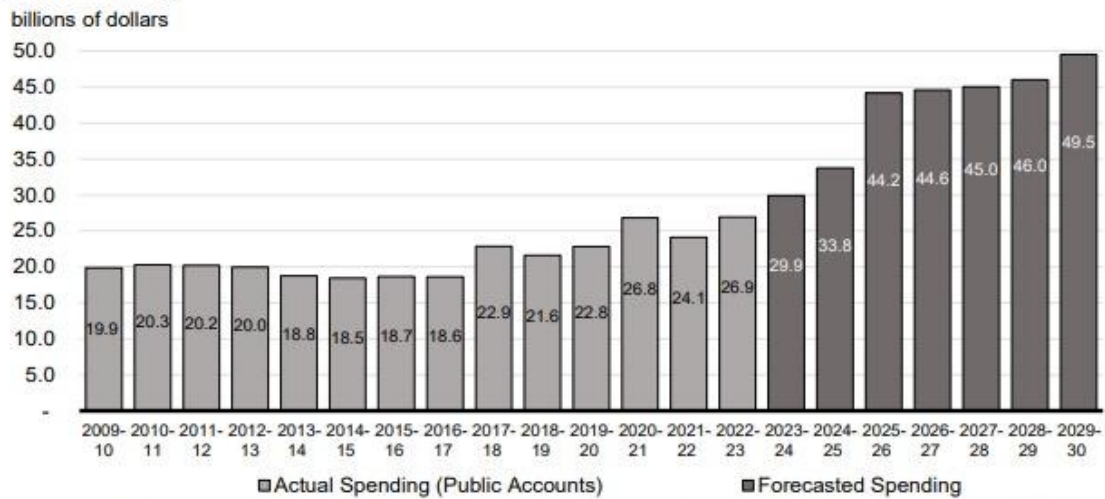
Web site: <http://vowpeace.org>

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

Chart 7.1

**Department of National Defence Spending, 2009-10 to 2029-30
(Cash Basis)**



Sources: Public Accounts of Canada, Department of National Defence 2024-25 Departmental Plan, and the Department of National Defence.

Notes: The forecasted spending reflects adjustments related to the Budget 2023 Refocusing Government Spending exercise and incremental funding in Budget 2024. Forecasted amounts are subject to change as initiatives progress through implementation.



SCHEDULE*

VANCOUVER TO OTTAWA

Vancouver	MAY 12
Kelowna	May 13
Calgary	MAY 14
Regina	MAY 15
Winnipeg	MAY 18
Sault St Marie	MAY 20
North Bay	MAY 22
London	MAY 23
Kitchener	MAY 24
Toronto	MAY 24-26
Ottawa	MAY 27-28

HALIFAX TO OTTAWA

Halifax	MAY 25
Amherst	MAY 25
Fredericton	MAY 26
Quebec City	MAY 26
Montreal	MAY 26-27
Ottawa	MAY 27 - 28

*details subject to change,
please reach out for more info

More information, please visit: <https://wilpfcanda.ca/index.php/2024/04/24/on-to-ottawa-peace-caravan/>