



CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE



Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in advance of the 2026 Federal Budget

By: The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) and the
Women's International League for Peace (WILPF)-Canada

May 22, 2026

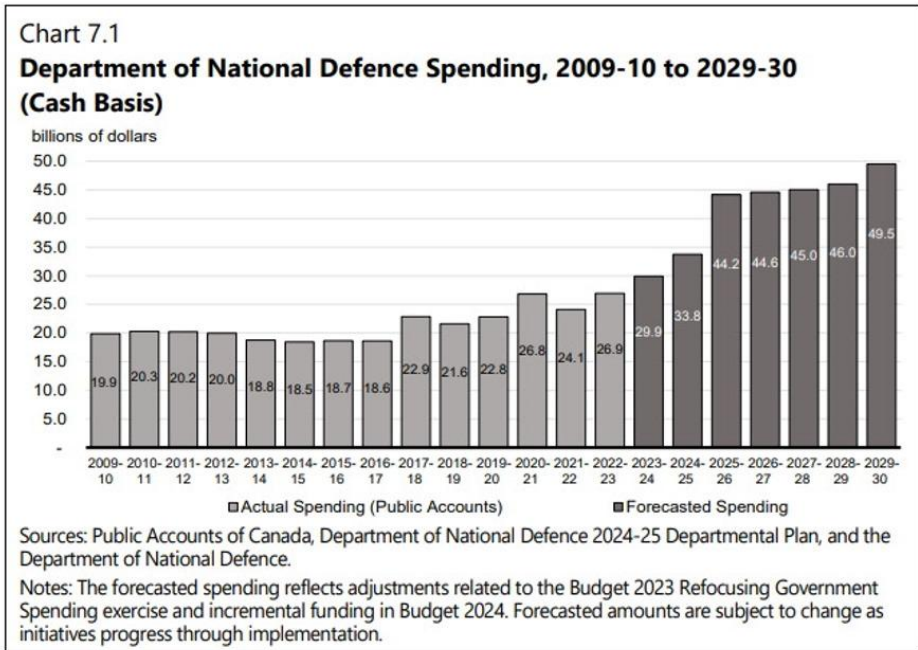
List of Recommendations

The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) and the Women's International League for Peace (WILPF)-Canada make the following recommendations for Budget 2026:

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government apply a Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA) to rising military spending and the new defence initiatives and publicly report on this analysis
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government *not* meet the NATO 5% GDP target and reduce military spending and re-allocate to deal with the poverty and climate crises
- **Recommendation 3:** That the government release a public report on the opportunity costs and trade-offs for Canadian women, Indigenous peoples, youth and the environment and climate on rising military spending
- **Recommendation 4:** That the government implement the important United Nations' report that was released last September "The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future."

Introduction: The Problem of Military Expenditures in Canada

As the graphic below from the federal budget shows, Canada’s military spending was \$18 billion in 2015 and \$44 billion in 2025. This year, military spending will soar to \$63 billion. According to NATO’s latest Defence Expenditures report, Canada is currently 6th highest for military spending among



allies. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s Trends on World Military Expenditures ranked Canada 16th highest in the world for military spending.

As Canada’s military has risen, so has poverty and carbon emissions as explained by the National Advisory Council on Poverty and the Canadian Climate Institute respectively.

From: Budget 2024: budget.canada.ca

VOW and WILPF-Canada are opposed to the federal government increasing military spending to maintain “high-end warfighting” and “prepare for a large-scale conventional war” as General Jennie Carginan stated in a recent interview. The Canadian military is at its lowest level of peacekeeping with only 27 soldiers on UN peace support operations according to the UN Peacekeeping Office.

The Public Accounts show that government prioritizes military spending and privileges DND over other social and environmental programs. Our recommendations confront this gross disparity.

Recommendation 1: That the government apply a Gender-Based Analysis+ to rising military spending and the new defence initiatives and publicly report on this analysis

In the latest federal budget, *Canada Strong*, the gender-based analysis presented in the *Statement and Impacts Report on Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion* acknowledged that investments in the military disproportionately benefit “white men.”

However, there is no publicly available information that shows that the government has done a GBA+ on NATO 2% and 5% GDP targets. Thus, we recommend that a comprehensive GBA+ is done for military spending and the new defence initiatives, including “Rebuilding, Re-arming and Re-investing the Canadian Armed Forces” and that this information be publicly reported.

According to DND’s latest figures, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is comprised of 84% men and 16% women. DND is also the largest federal department with over 100,000 regular and reserve military personnel. Government spending disproportionately supports a department and work force that is dominated by men. Despite DND’s efforts to recruit more women into CAF, women are not joining. The answer is not more ways to recruit women, but a re-allocation of public funding to support the vital work done by women in other critical sectors, such as the care economy.

Recommendation 2: That the government not meet the NATO 2% and 5% GDP targets and reduce military spending and re-allocate to deal with the poverty and climate crises

To achieve the NATO Defence Investment Pledge of 5% of GDP by 2035, the Prime Minister admitted that the federal government will increase military spending from \$44 billion/year in 2025 to \$150 billion/year by 2035, despite poverty and climate change worsening across the country (see Appendix 1). We are aware that while the federal government has increased military spending it has cut the funding to other federal departments and issued layoffs to thousands of federal employees that threaten the services and programs that Canadian rely on (Appendix 2).

The urgent priorities for Canadians are affordable housing, health care, education, pharmacare, dental care, child care, climate resilience, and Indigenous reconciliation. Increasing military spending and expanding the defence industrial base do not achieve any of these Canadian priorities. Moreover, the Liberal government’s 493-page budget did not make any reference to the “green economy” or the “care economy,” which supports the well-being of Canadians and is the sector that is dominated by women. We recommend that the government *not* meet the NATO 2% and 5% GDP targets and launch a phased reduction to military spending with a re-allocation to urgent social and environmental programs at home and abroad.

Recommendation 3: That the government release a public report on the opportunity costs and trade-offs for Canadian women, Indigenous peoples, youth and the environment and climate on rising military spending

We recommend that the federal government release a public report on the opportunity costs and trade-offs for Canadian women, Indigenous peoples, youth and the environment and climate on rising military spending.

We note that Canada's 2025 federal budget has faced criticism from student organizations, faculty associations, and higher education advocates for dramatically increasing military and defence spending while failing to meaningfully address the long-term underfunding of post-secondary education. The federal government committed billions toward military procurement, NATO obligations, Arctic defence expansion, and security infrastructure, even as universities across Canada continue to face program cuts, layoffs, larger class sizes, and rising tuition pressures ("Budget 2025 Analysis"; "Federal Budget Ignores Chronic Underfunding").

We argue that public money should instead be diverted toward reducing tuition fees, expanding grants instead of loans, building affordable student housing, funding public research institutions, creating paid internship and co-op opportunities, and improving campus mental health services. Investments should also prioritize civilian industries that directly benefit society, including renewable energy development, climate adaptation infrastructure, public healthcare innovation, sustainable agriculture, public transit expansion, and affordable housing construction. Young Canadian engineers, scientists, programmers, and researchers should not be pushed toward employment tied to the Department of National Defence, weapons manufacturing, surveillance industries, or military research simply because those sectors receive disproportionate public investment. Canadian youth deserve opportunities to develop technologies that address climate change, accessibility, clean energy, medicine, and public wellbeing rather than technologies that reinforce a growing war economy. Expanding militarization risks reshaping Canadian innovation around defence priorities while education, social programs, and public research remain underfunded during a period of worsening economic insecurity for students and young workers ("Post-Secondary Leaders Express Mixed Reactions"; Usher).

"Budget 2025 Analysis." [Canadian Association of University Teachers \(CAUT\)](#). Accessed 22 May 2026.

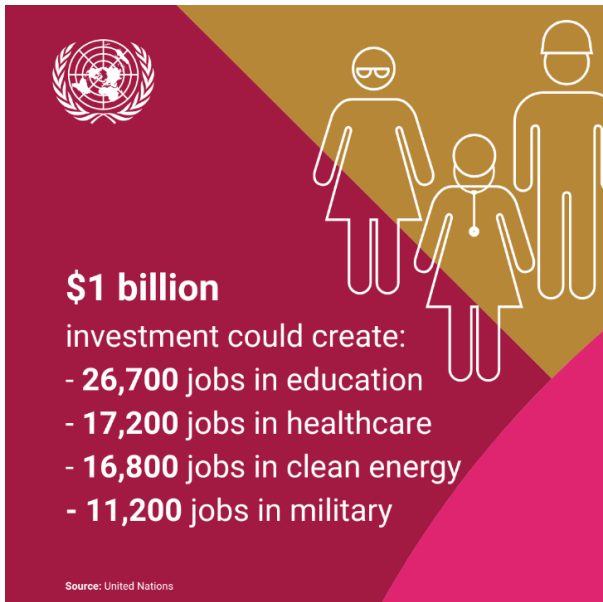
"Federal Budget Ignores Chronic Underfunding of Post-Secondary Education." [Canadian Federation of Students](#). Accessed 22 May 2026.

"Post-Secondary Leaders Express Mixed Reactions to Budget 2025." [University Affairs, 2025, University Affairs article](#). Accessed 22 May 2026.

Usher, Alex. *2025 Budget Commentary*. Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2025, [Higher Education Strategy Associates PDF](#). Accessed 22 May 2026.

Recommendation 4: That the government implement the important United Nations' report that was released last September "The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future."

Last September, the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres released an important report, *The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future*,



to all member states. It raised alarms about ever rising military expenditures and urged states to reconceive security based on human needs not militarism. It also showed that more jobs could be created in the care economy over the military. The report made the following important points on defence spending and gender inequality:

- “Higher military spending worsens gender inequality primarily through crowding-out effects on social expenditure, as women and girls disproportionately rely on social programmes.”
- “The unbalanced nature of female-to-male employment in the military sector has long-term effects on human capital accumulation, as women are more likely to invest income in health and

education for themselves and their children.”

- “Evidence suggests that high levels of militarism exacerbate gender-based violence.”

The UN report also emphasized that the climate change targets and sustainable development goals are not on track, because of inadequate financial resources. It warned, “Military expenditure harms the planet because it is emissions-intensive. Each dollar allocated to the military generates more than twice the greenhouse gas emissions of a dollar spent elsewhere.” This month, the Canadian Climate Institute published a report that showed that Canada “is not on track to meet any of its climate goals, including its 2035 target and net zero emissions by 2050.” Yet, the federal government has ignored the recommendations of the UN and is diverting billions of tax dollars to carbon-intensive re-armament. More weapons will make war more likely and will make global warming worse.

About

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>

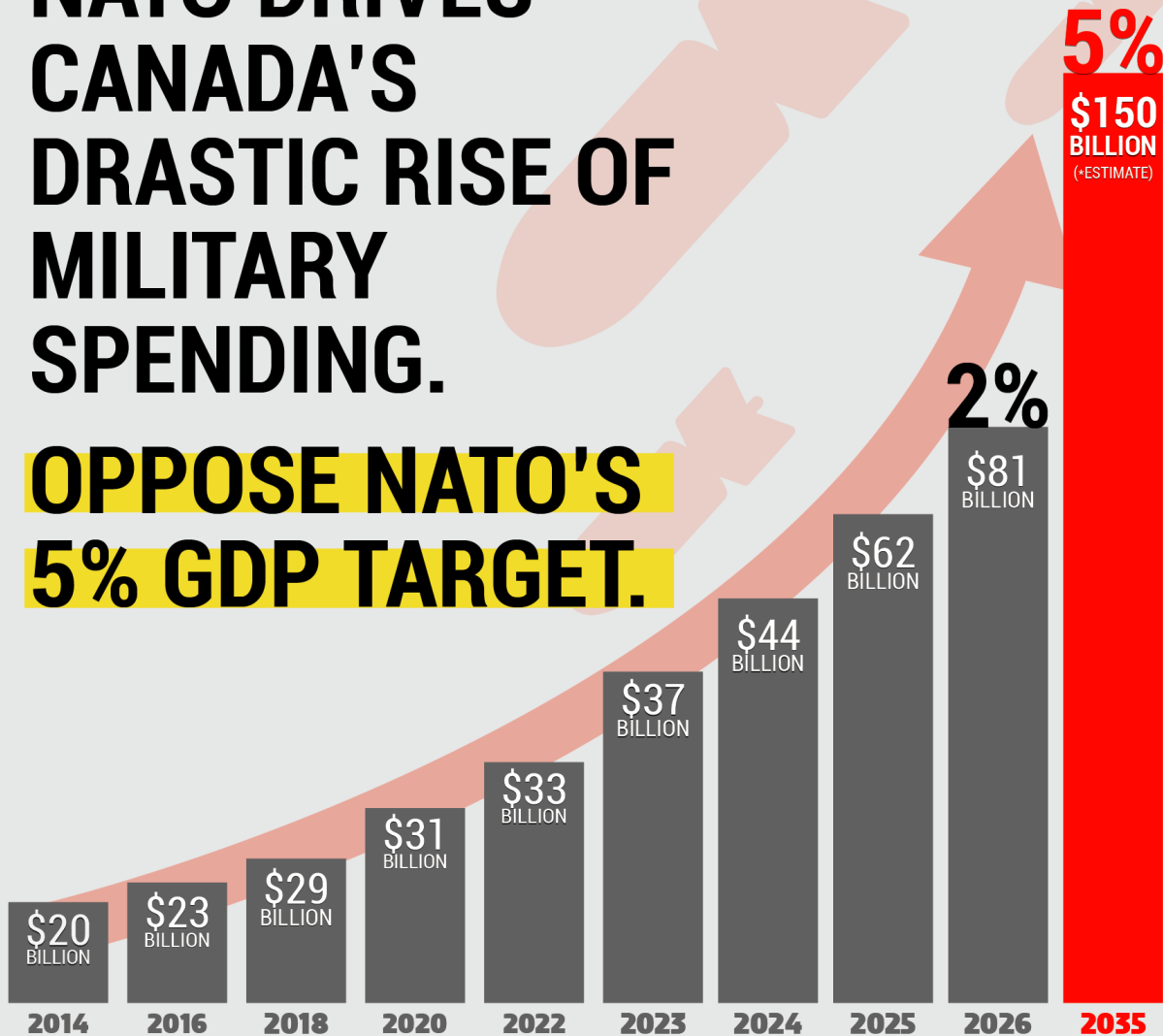
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Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Canada is a membership-led organization committed to a feminist peace, social justice, and gender equality. We are a non-partisan, non-governmental organization members across the country. We 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

NATO DRIVES CANADA'S DRASTIC RISE OF MILITARY SPENDING.

OPPOSE NATO'S 5% GDP TARGET.



SOURCE

NATO DEFENCE EXPENDITURES REPORT & CANADA STRONG FEDERAL BUDGET.

**DEMAND CANADA WITHDRAW FROM NATO,
REDUCE MILITARY SPENDING AND RE-ALLOCATE
TO THE CARE ECONOMY & CLIMATE ACTION.**



wilpfcanada.ca

CANADA'S 2025-2026 BUDGET WILL INCREASE MILITARY SPENDING BUT DECREASE EVERYTHING ELSE.

INCREASE \$45 BILLION TO NATIONAL DEFENCE & CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

RECRUIT:

- ↑ 13,000 NEW SOLDIERS
- ↑ 1,000 NEW RCMP OFFICERS
- ↑ 1,000 NEW BORDER AGENTS

DECREASE \$60 BILLION TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

CUT 40,000 FEDERAL JOBS AND SERVICES IN:

- ↓ AGRICULTURE CANADA
- ↓ CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY
- ↓ CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS
- ↓ EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA
- ↓ ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA
- ↓ FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA
- ↓ GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA
- ↓ HEALTH CANADA
- ↓ HERITAGE CANADA
- ↓ NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA
- ↓ PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT CANADA
- ↓ STATISTICS CANADA
- ↓ TREASURY BOARD

SOURCE:

CBC NEWS REPORTS, JANUARY 16 AND 31
CANADA STRONG FEDERAL BUDGET 2025



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