

Written Contribution:

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Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Canada Section

We, the members of WILPF Canada, applaud the Government of Canada for adopting a feminist approach to foreign policy and for appointing a dedicated Women, Peace and Security Ambassador, Ms. Jacqueline O'Neil, thus giving Canadians an opportunity for ongoing contact with her office on women and peace issues.

We are also proud of the fact that following the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Canada has on several occasions reaffirmed its commitment to protect and promote the rights of women consistent with the Charter of the UN, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international human rights groups dedicated to the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

In addition, following the Women Deliver conference held in Vancouver in 2019, the Canadian government set aside \$300 million and established the Equality Fund to support women's organizations around the world. It truly assists the efforts of women to bring cultural, economic and political changes required to make global gender equality a reality. All these are demonstrations of Canada's ability to take on a leadership role.

However, much remains to be done.

In Canada we continue to watch indigenous women and girls being denied their basic rights by the government failure to follow up on the promise made to develop an Action Plan to implement the 231 recommendations contained in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry report. Canada must show the world that reaffirmation of the elimination of violence against women and girls is a Canadian priority in Canada. We call on the government of Canada to set an example for the rest of the world by acting immediately on this issue.

Secondly, a feminist approach to migration and refugee issues must focus on women and children who are displaced by conflict and national disasters. The UN reports that women and girls account for 70% of all human trafficking victims. With respect to Canada's foreign aid, we recommend that additional support be given to secure safe legal routes for refugee women so that they do not have to take dangerous journeys at the hands of smugglers. It is equally important and urgent to work with other nations to consider conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime.

Thirdly, Canada's defence policy must be reviewed in face of the growing concern and protest against the decision to buy jet fighters to be used by NORAD and NATO. Canadian fighter jets have played significant roles in the US led bombing of Iraq in 1991, Serbia in 1999, Libya in 2011 and Syria in 2014 to 2016. We also call on the government to stop the sale of war equipment to nations who use it against innocent people, many of whom are women and children, such as in Yemen. Money budgeted for defence could be put to much better use to

create green jobs for women and girls all over the world who have lost their incomes due to COVID 19.

Fourthly, the Treaty to ban Nuclear Weapons will enter into force in January 2021. It is important that Canada sign this treaty to show to the world and to NATO its opposition to unnecessary and unwanted weapons of mass destruction. The explanation given by Canada that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons contributes to divide the international community is not an acceptable position given the fact that all other non-nuclear weapon countries are working toward a world free of nuclear weapons. In the name of Peace and Security we call on Canada to sign the Treaty.

Finally, we ask the Canadian government to reinforce the implementation of Resolution 1325 and ensure that women with voice and vote are at all the peace negotiations.

As for Canadian foreign aid, it should be dispensed within a gendered intersectional lens and use of disaggregated data. Governments should be required to adopt a gender-based analysis in order to receive the funding.

We thank Global Affairs for its invitation to contribute to this Feminist Foreign Policy Dialogue and hope that our contribution will not be in vain.

On Behalf of WILPF Canada,

Patsy Gorge, Marlene LeGates, Ellen Woodsworth

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