



Canadian Friends
Service Committee
(QUAKERS)

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We note with sadness that arms sales are an increasingly lucrative industry for Canada, which has become the second largest supplier of arms to the Middle East.¹ Canadian arms have found their way to upholding many of the world's deadliest conflicts, including in South Sudan and Libya, where our arms were supposedly prohibited by sanctions.² This cannot be accepted by people of conscience.

Canada is arming countries which make a regular practice of violating basic human rights and human dignity. In Saudi Arabia human rights defenders are regularly arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned with unfair trials, torture is widespread, the death penalty is common, and discrimination against women and the Shi'a minority is enshrined in law. Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition which may be responsible for war crimes in Yemen.³

Israel, whose on-going occupation of Palestinian land Canada acknowledges is illegal⁴, has increasingly in the past decade engaged in unlawful killing of Palestinian civilians including children, repressed nonviolent protests, regularly used torture, imprisoned conscientious objectors to military service, and imposed collective punishment, in particular on the people of Gaza by maintaining a military blockade that has made life there increasingly unbearable.⁵

Canada has a particularly close military relationship with Israel. This includes both countries purchasing large amounts of military equipment from each other, and a formal agreement, the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership, mandating ongoing military and defence material cooperation and joint training, as well as maintaining "Military Attaché Offices" in both countries.⁶ We are deeply troubled that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board invests in companies directly involved in militarism, including benefitting from the illegal occupation of Palestinian land.⁷

War making is a business. As long as some can profit from producing and selling the weapons of war, they blindly seek to do so, regardless of the consequences. In an increasingly interconnected global community, the horrors resulting from war in countries like Syria, Iraq, and Yemen impact us all. The legacy left by tools developed here in Canada is destruction of communities, of the natural world of which we are a part, and production of increasing instability and hopelessness. Today's violence lies at the roots of violence in the future. This must end. We cannot stand by and do nothing, and we do not put our faith in Canadian weapons bringing peace.

We call on Canada not to sell arms to countries which may use these arms in violation of international law or to repress civilian populations. We call on Canada to sign and ratify the United Nations *Arms Trade Treaty* without further delay, and to share information about its involvement in the international arms trade in a thorough, timely, and transparent manner. As Friends, we hope Canada's role can move from a backer of wars to a supporter of creative non-military actions to transform conflicts and build peace.

Endnotes

¹ Chase, Steven. *Canada now the second biggest arms exporter to Middle East, data show*. (2016, June 14). The Globe and Mail. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canada-now-the-second-biggest-arms-exporter-to-middle-east-data-show/article30459788/>

² Brewster, Murray. Canadian company accused of 'knowingly' breaking Sudan arms embargo. (2016, September 13). Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/streit-un-arms-report-sudan-1.3758670>

³ Amnesty International. *Saudi Arabia 2015/2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/saudi-arabia/report-saudi-arabia/>

⁴ "The Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories and establishes Israel's obligations as an occupying power, in particular with respect to the humane treatment of the inhabitants of the occupied territories. As referred to in UN Security Council Resolutions 446 and 465, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention." *Canadian Policy on Key Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. (2015, June 24). Global Affairs Canada. Retrieved from http://www.international.gc.ca/name-anmo/peace_process-processus_paix/canadian_policy-politique_canadienne.aspx?lang=eng

⁵ Amnesty International. *Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories 2015/2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

⁶ *Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership: Memorandum of Understanding*. (2014, January). Global Affairs Canada. Retrieved from http://www.international.gc.ca/name-anmo/canada_israel_MOU-prot_ent_canada_israel.aspx?lang=eng

⁷ *Investigate Occupation Screen (Israel/Palestine)*. American Friends Service Committee. Retrieved October 27, 2016 from <http://investigate.afsc.org/screens/occupation> listed many companies but highlighted 19 as most deserving of divestment. Canada Pension Plan Investment Board was invested in four of these 19: Bank Hapoalim BM, Bank Leumi Le-Israel BM, Cemex SAB de CV, and Mizrahi Tefahot Bank Ltd. (*Foreign Publicly-Traded Equity Holdings as of March 31, 2016*. CPP Investment Board. Retrieved from <http://www.cppib.com/en/what-we-do/our-investments.html>)