

The following open letter was sent to all Members of Parliament.

February 23, 2026

As Canadian organizations, faith leaders, and experts in peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and development, we write to encourage you and your colleagues from all parties to find common ground to support the movement to committee at second reading of Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act, which seeks to close critical gaps in Canada's arms control legislation by amending the *Export and Import Permits Act* to better align with Canada's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

We believe this moment of global disruption offers a vital opportunity for Canada to demonstrate principled, non-partisan leadership and its longstanding commitments to human rights, peace, and the protection of civilians, including children, by fully harmonizing its arms control regime with international law.

As agencies with global experience – including in conflict zones where weapons fuel immense human suffering – we are deeply concerned by the risks posed when arms exports are not subject to rigorous legal safeguards. The stakes are high – for human life, for international law, and for Canada's reputation as a principled global actor. Children, who are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and violations of international humanitarian law, bear the gravest consequences when these safeguards fail.

We recognize the important step Canada took in 2018 by passing Bill C-47, which aimed to bring Canadian law in line with the Arms Trade Treaty. While that legislation marked significant progress, important work remains to be done to fully incorporate crucial articles of the treaty that were omitted in 2019, such as Article 6, which prohibits arms exports that would contribute to genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law. Moreover, by maintaining export permit exemptions for U.S.-bound arms transfers, Bill C-47 significantly undermined Canada's full implementation of the Treaty.

Bill C-233 would close these existing loopholes in our arms trade legislation and enshrine these fundamental guarantees in Canadian law. Without this amendment, Canada continues to be at serious risk of being complicit in the very kinds of atrocities the ATT was created to prevent.

Bill C-233 does not restrict manufacturing, sales, innovation, or procurement on the part of the Canadian Armed Forces. It merely standardizes risk assessments so that exports to the United States undergo the same process as all others, which reflects the practice of nearly all of Canada's NATO allies as fellow States Parties to the ATT.

This is not a partisan issue. It is a matter of values, international responsibility, and principled leadership. Canada built the multilateral system of international law on

which the ATT is based. It remains in our interest to protect it. We urge all Members of Parliament to support Bill C-233 moving to committee and help Canada take this meaningful next step toward transparency, accountability, and the prevention of human suffering. We also welcome constructive dialogue and any amendments at committee that would further strengthen the Bill's human rights and transparency provisions, ensuring that Canada's export controls are beyond reproach in all contexts.

We would be grateful to discuss further to share our perspectives. Please reply to this message or contact any of us to set up a meeting.