

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

March 1, 2021

Re: End Canada's support of the war on Yemen and ongoing weapons exports to Saudi Arabia

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The undersigned, representing a cross-section of Canadian labour, arms control, human rights, international security, peace, and other civil society organizations, are writing to reiterate our continued opposition to the Canadian government's issuance of arms export permits to Saudi Arabia.

Now entering its sixth year, the war on Yemen has killed almost a quarter of a million people, and Yemen today remains the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Over 4 million people have been displaced because of the war, and 80% of the population, including 12.2 million children, are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

On February 4, 2021 President Joe Biden announced the US would be freezing all American arms sales to Saudi Arabia and ending all US support for the Saudi-led war on Yemen. A week earlier, on January 25, 2021, a Global Day of Action to End the War on Yemen was held, which included the participation of civil society, labour and anti-war groups from across Canada, with [protests](#), car caravans, events and [arms-blockades](#) in Vancouver, London, [Hamilton](#), Montreal and [Halifax](#).

[Germany](#) and [Italy](#) have also recently banned or halted arms exports to Saudi Arabia, while the EU Parliament [urged its members](#) to halt arms sales to UAE and Saudi Arabia on February 11, 2021.

Canadian civil society has spoken out against the multi-billion-dollar arms deal with Saudi Arabia [since it was first signed](#), and has frequently highlighted the risks associated with the use of LAVs within Saudi Arabia in the context of broader human rights concerns, as well as in the Yemen conflict, including the risk of weapons proliferation to Houthi forces.

In [March 2019](#), [August 2019](#), [April 2020](#) and [September 2020](#) you received letters in which dozens of organizations representing millions of people across Canada repeatedly raised concerns about the serious ethical, legal, human rights and humanitarian implications of Canada's ongoing arms exports to Saudi Arabia. We regret that, to date, no response to these concerns has been received from you or relevant Cabinet ministers. Two Canada-wide days of action were held on June 11, 2020 and September 21, 2020. These demanded that the government end arms sales to Saudi Arabia and included demonstrations outside MP offices across the country, the GDLS-C factory in London, Ontario, where LAVs sold to Saudi Arabia are made, and GDLS-C's headquarters in Ottawa.

On September 28, 2020, the UN Human Rights Council [named Canada](#) as one of the parties fuelling the ongoing war in Yemen by continuing arms sales to Saudi Arabia. It is unacceptable

that Canada is involved in this trade and disgraceful that Canada is the second-largest supplier of arms to the entire Middle East region. According to the Export of Military Goods report for 2019, Canada exported approximately [\\$3.8 billion](#) to countries other than the U.S. [\\$2.7 billion](#) of this was to Saudi Arabia.

In Human Rights Watch's scathing [2021 World Report on Yemen](#), Canada is noted as one of the countries that continues to supply arms to Saudi Arabia despite documented evidence of continuing violations of laws of war by the coalition, and documentation of the use of Canadian weapons in the war.

UN agencies and humanitarian organizations have repeatedly documented that there is no military solution possible in the current conflict in Yemen. The constant supply of arms to Saudi Arabia only prolongs hostilities, and increases the suffering and numbers of the dead.

Many Canadian companies are profiting from arming the worst humanitarian situation on the planet. Some key companies involved in the arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries that are part of the coalition involved in the war in Yemen are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Dynamics Land Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Pratt-Whitney Canada |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Streit Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Aerospace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PGW Defense Technologies | <input type="checkbox"/> Bell Helicopters Textron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terradyne | <input type="checkbox"/> Aeryon Labs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IAG Guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> CMC Electronics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wescam | <input type="checkbox"/> Newcon Optik |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAE | <input type="checkbox"/> Robotics Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bombardier | <input type="checkbox"/> Viking Air |

Some of the GDLS sub-contractors in the LAV supply chain include:

- Armatec (Dorchester, ON)
- Attica Manufacturing inc. (London, ON)
- Battlefield International (Cayuga, ON)
- DEW Engineering (Miramichi, NB & Ottawa)
- FPH Group (London, ON)
- General Kinetics (Brampton, ON)
- PRO Metal Industries (SK)
- SED Systems (SK)

Some companies in Canada involved in the transport of arms en route to Saudi Arabia are:

- Port of Saint John, New Brunswick (port of call of Saudi national shipping company)
- Port of Montreal (entry point for LAV cannons and turrets imported from Belgium by General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada)
- CN Rail (transports LAVs on rail)
- Paddock Transport International (truck transportation of LAVs)

Canada acceded to the international Arms Trade Treaty in September 2019. We ask the Canadian government to now ensure compliance with all the articles and principles of the Treaty.

Canada must end all arms exports to Saudi Arabia immediately and expand humanitarian aid for the people of Yemen.

We recognize that the end of Canadian arms exports to Saudi Arabia will impact workers in the arms industry. We therefore urge the government to work with trade unions representing workers in the arms industry to develop a plan that secures the livelihoods of those who would be impacted by the suspension of arms exports to Saudi Arabia. Such a plan would include providing government support for the conversion of arms manufacturing facilities from arms production to peaceful, green production. This can be done in a phased manner so jobs are not lost, but the transformation must start now. We envision Canada taking on a role as a peaceful nation that promotes positive peace and human rights and that does not arm other countries, least of all those involved in war crimes and ongoing human rights abuses.

Sincerely,

Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network

Signatories:

Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility
Canadian Foreign Policy Institute
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Canadian Muslim Peace Alliance
Canadian Peace Congress
Canadian Peace Initiative
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Canadian Council of Muslim Women Niagara Halton
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME)
Conscience Canada
Council of Canadians - Le Conseil des Canadiens
Denman Island Peace Group
Digileak - NEWS Not Noise
Edmonton Raging Grannies
Federation of Medical Women of Canada, Women's Peace and Security Committee
Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice
Friends for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention
Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
The Global Sunrise Project
Group of 78
Hamilton Coalition To Stop The War
Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition
Indigene-Community
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada
Just Peace Advocates/Mouvement Pour Une Paix Juste
Kitchener Waterloo Chapter Council of Canadians
Labour Against the Arms Trade
Leadnow
Migrant Workers Alliance for Change
Migrante Canada
Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)
Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine-Israel (NMJPI)
Nobel Women's Initiative

Nonviolence International Canada
Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace
OPIRG Brock
Ottawa Peace and Environment Resource Centre
Ottawa Quakers
Ottawa Raging Grannies
Our Lady's Missionaries
Pacifi (Canadians Organizing for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament)
Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU)
Pax Christi Toronto
Peace Alliance Winnipeg
Peace and Justice Alliance
Peace Brigades International-Canada
Peace Magazine and Project Save the World
People for Peace, London
Pivot2Peace
Protecting Canadian Children
Regina Peace Council
Religions for Peace Canada
Religions pour la Paix - Québec
Rights Action
Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network
Science for Peace
Servas Canada
Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste
Sustainable Development Association
Vancouver Peace Poppies
Victoria Peace Coalition
Victoria Raging Grannies
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Canada
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Nanaimo Branch
World BEYOND War
World BEYOND War Vancouver
World Beyond War Victoria
Yemeni Community in Canada

CC: Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, Minister of National Defense
Hon. Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Official Opposition
Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada
Elizabeth May, Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Annamie Paul, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Michael Chong, Conservative Party of Canada Foreign Affairs Critic
Stéphane Bergeron, Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic
Jack Harris, New Democratic Party of Canada Foreign Affairs Critic
Paul Manly, Green Party Foreign Affairs Critic
Jacqueline O'Neill, Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security

Additional References

- Amnesty International Canada, September 2020, [letter to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Re: Ongoing Weapons Exports to Saudi Arabia](#)
- ARIJ, February 2019, [The End User: How did western weapons end up in the hands of ISIS and AQAP in Yemen?](#)
- CAE, March 2017, [CAE expands to new facility in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates](#)
- CBC, February 2016, [Canadian rifles may have fallen into Yemen rebel hands, likely via Saudi Arabia](#)
- Ceasefire.ca, May 2020, [War, famine, and pandemic in Yemen but business as usual for Canadian arms exports](#)
- Defense World, May 2017, [CAE to provide drone training to UAE Air Force](#)
- Globe and Mail, April 2020, [Opinion: In the midst of our COVID-19 crisis, Canada lifted its moratorium on arms exports to Saudi Arabia](#)
- Government of Canada, November 2019, [MEMORANDUM FOR INFORMATION: Update on export permits to Saudi Arabia](#)
- Journal de Montréal, January 2019, [Des armes fabriquées au Québec pour la guerre au Yémen](#)
- The Leveller, October 2020, [Canada & the Arms Trade: Fuelling war in Yemen & beyond](#)
- National Observer, November 2018, [Is Saudi Arabia deploying Canadian-made weapons in Yemen?](#)
- Project Ploughshares, May 2020, [Open letter re: Ottawa's decision to lift moratorium on Saudi arms exports](#)
- Project Ploughshares, September 2020, [Analyzing Canada's 2019 Exports of Military Goods report](#)
- Project Ploughshares, [Top 5 Arms Exporters to Saudi Arabia 2014-2018](#)
- Radio Canada International, October 2019, [Footage of Canadian LAVs in Yemen raises new questions about Saudi arms deal](#)