



Canadian Friends
Service Committee
(QUAKERS)
www.quakerservice.ca

Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

July 16, 2018

Dear Minister,

Greetings from Canadian Friends Service Committee, the peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada. In December 2016 the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) wrote to you to express our collective concern that Canada is arming countries that make a regular practice of violating basic human rights and human dignity. We find this deeply immoral, and ultimately detrimental to world security and peace. We are writing today to express our continued concern, and to highlight recent examples.

Canada's arms industry is opaque, as are the criteria for approving arms sales, and the role of the Canadian Commercial Corporation. It is our view that the public would benefit from more transparent information about how Canadian tax dollars are spent on supporting arms deals, and how human rights concerns are or are not taken into adequate consideration.

What we *have* been able to learn is alarming. For instance, the announcement that Canada will purchase Israeli Artemis dronesⁱ is troubling because the company involved, Israel Aerospace Industries, frequently boasts that its technologies are "battle tested" in places like Gaza, where UN commissions and human rights observers have documented evidence that Israel may have committed war crimes.ⁱⁱ

Partners of ours also recently alerted us to the fact that drones used by Israel to fire tear gas during mass killings (largely of unarmed civilians) in Gaza appeared to contain parts made by the Canadian company Actuonix.

These are just two examples of a close military relationship between Israel and Canada involving weapons sales, intelligence sharing, joint training, and more.

We are encouraged by aspects of Bill C-47 as Canada joins the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). However, we also have significant concerns that Bill C-47 does not ensure that Canada meets the standards established by the ATT. Article 6.3 of the ATT states:

A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms [...] if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which it is a Party.ⁱⁱⁱ



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How is the likelihood that Israel will use Canadian weapons systems against civilians, in violation of international law, taken into consideration by Canadian regulators when issuing export permits? Where is the accountability when this foreseeable event happens, as the world has recently witnessed in Gaza? We have already expressed to you similar concerns regarding Canadian exports of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia.^{iv}

We are also concerned by a major loophole within the framework established by Bill C-47. Deals like the proposed sale of Bell 412 helicopters to the Philippines, a country governed by a regime with a chilling human rights record that includes extrajudicial killings,^v could possibly be orchestrated via the US. The helicopters could be shipped from Canada to the US (a non-party to the ATT), be completed there, and then be sent on to the Philippines.^{vi}

We're concerned that exempting the US from licensing and reporting requirements on arms exports profoundly compromises Canada's participation in the ATT, even signalling to other countries that they too can undermine and contravene the ATT's intent. The ATT is meant to apply globally, and calls on state parties to have "an effective and transparent national control system regulating the transfer of conventional arms." We can't see how such a system will be possible for Canada while exempting the majority of Canadian arms exports, which go to the US.

As an historic peace church, the Religious Society of Friends has witnessed for peace for over 350 years. We long to live in a country that proactively builds peace and does not contribute to the devastation wrought by armed conflict. We call on you to do everything in your power to strengthen Canada's arms controls so that they meet and exceed the standards of the ATT.

In Friendship,

Derek Nice,
Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee

cc
Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister
Elizabeth May, Green Party of Canada
Mario Beaulieu, Bloc Québécois
Erin O'Toole, Conservative Party of Canada
Hélène Laverdière, New Democratic Party



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- ⁱ Ahronheim, Anna. "Israeli and Canadian companies team up on breakthrough spy drones." *The Jerusalem Post*, June 4, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israeli-and-Canadian-companies-team-up-on-breakthrough-spy-drones-559077>
- ⁱⁱ UN Human Rights Council. "Report of the detailed findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1." June 24, 2015, A/HRC/29/CRP.4, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIGaza/A_HRC_CRP_4.docx
- ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations, 13-27217, "The Arms Trade Treaty." 6.3, p. 5, <https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/English7.pdf>
- ^{iv} Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). "Minute on Canada's involvement in the arms trade." November 26, 2016, <https://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/20161126-Minute-on-Canadas-involvement-in-the-arms-trade.pdf>
- ^v Amnesty International. "Philippines 2017/2018." <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/philippines/report-philippines/>
- ^{vi} Pugliese, David. "Helicopter firm tries to revive cancelled Canadian deal with the Philippines." *National Post*, April 30, 2018, <http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/helicopter-firm-tries-to-revive-cancelled-canadian-deal-with-the-philippines>



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