



# Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

November, 2018



## Year-end so far

Since our *Annual Accountability Report* (<https://report.quakerservice.ca>) went online and our year-end giving appeal was mailed out in October we've received \$78,130.30 from 645 donations. **Thank you** to everyone who has made a gift to stand up for justice and peace! We're getting there, but we still very much need your support. If you haven't donated to CFSC yet, please do so now to get your 2018 tax receipt before the end of the year. Whatever you're able to give helps tremendously.

## He Jiankui uses CRISPR on humans

Chinese scientist He Jiankui and his team created an international uproar recently when they claimed to have edited the DNA of twin girls who were already born by the time the announcement was made.

If true, this appears to us at CFSC to have been reckless human experimentation, using an unproven procedure (without even having the possibility of conferring significant medical benefits) with major unknowns about the impacts and safety.

This human experimentation demonstrates that individuals can choose to circumvent the weak processes and often voluntary guidelines in place currently. We are deeply concerned about the potential grave and unknown harms that even well-meaning researchers could cause, and we call again for a renewed focus on *precaution*.

We joined nearly 200 individual academics and organizations in calling for an important meeting of scientists interested in the question of human genome editing to condemn He's experiment (which they did) and to call on governments and the United Nations to prohibit reproductive experiments with human genetic engineering (which they did not do).

Read our brief blog post: <https://quakerservice.ca/HeJiankui>

Read an article explaining 15 problems with He's experiment: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/12/15-worrying-things-about-crispr-babies-scandal/577234/>

Find out about our positions on the difficult moral, ethical, and spiritual implications of this and many other applications of a suite of rapidly advancing techniques—synthetic biology: <https://quakerservice.ca/sbissues>

## Urgent action needed to ensure Indigenous women are not sterilized without their consent

On Human Rights Day (December 10) CFSC joined with many organizations in issuing a joint open letter that notes:  
*Across Canada and as recently as 2017, Indigenous women report being forcibly or coercively sterilized. Some women were incorrectly told the procedure is reversible. Others were separated from their babies until they consented to a tubal ligation....*

*Sterilizing women without their free, full, and informed consent is a form of violence and torture. Measures to prevent births within ethnic or racial groups is explicitly prohibited by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.*

Read the full letter and find a link to Amnesty International Canada's petition at: <https://quakerservice.ca/sterilization>

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### **Considering the best interests of the child**

CFSC works to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of children of incarcerated parents in Canada. In 2016, CFSC commissioned a review of sample law cases from the year 2015 to determine if the best interests of the child were considered when sentencing their parents. A newly released research paper summarises current literature and research on children of incarcerated parents in Canada, international standards and norms, and presents our research on sentencing practices. The paper finishes with some reflections and suggested areas of further research and policy consideration.

In summary, CFSC found that, unlike best practices, Canada is lagging behind other common law countries and emerging international standards that prioritize the best interests of the child when dealing with individuals with parental responsibilities. Find out more and access the full report at: <https://quakerservice.ca/CaseLawReview>

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### **Let Mohamed Harkat stay!**

Mohamed Harkat faces imminent deportation to Algeria, where there is a high probability of his being tortured or killed. CFSC has written a second letter to the Minister of Public Safety calling for Canada to let him stay. Mohamed Harkat's case is extremely problematic for many reasons described in our letter: <https://quakerservice.ca/MohamedHarkat> and by the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (CFSC is a member): <http://iclmg.ca/canada-deporting-man-torture-will-let-happen/>

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### **CFSC supports call for national day against hate**

In 2015 CFSC and Canadian Yearly Meeting issued a joint statement *Quakers appalled at growing Islamophobia* (<https://quakerservice.ca/Islamophobia>). It has been one of the most read and shared documents on the CFSC website, indicating that a great many people share these concerns.

Sadly, the situation may be getting worse. The most recent data from Statistics Canada highlights a dramatic [151% increase in Islamophobic incidents across Canada in 2017](#)—and those are just the ones that were reported! Jewish and black people also faced increased hate crimes in 2017. This pattern is being fueled by specific media, think tanks, and politicians and we urgently need to raise awareness and change this destructive trajectory.

For this reason CFSC whole-heartedly supports the National Council of Canadian Muslims' call to make January 29—the day of the 2017 massacre at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City—a National Day of Action against Hate and Intolerance. If you feel so led, you can let your MP know why this issue matters to you. Write your own message or use the NCCM's prewritten email: <https://www.nccm.ca/urge-the-government-to-designate-january-29-as-national-day-of-action-against-hate-intolerance/> (enter your postal code at the side of the page to get started).

Also be on the lookout for a book CFSC has been working on for the past two years—*Are We Done Fighting? Building Understanding in a World of Hate and Division* (<https://AreWeDoneFighting.com>). It collects research and stories to help us address hatred head on with the greatest chance of success. The book will be released in June 2019 and right now it's available for pre-order at a discount. We look forward to sharing more with you about the book once it's published.

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