



WHITE PAPER

Where is the Peace in Canada's Women Peace and Security Agenda?

Addressing demilitarization
as a key priority





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Purpose of White Paper

Militarization is a barrier to meaningful peace and security in Canada and around the world. The purpose of this paper is to highlight existing government policy relationships to militarization, to demonstrate how this impedes efforts to bolster global peace and security, and to present alternative options for the future. Pursuing demilitarization is necessary for upholding Canada's commitment to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) priorities, and should be prioritized in future Canadian National Action Plans (NAP). We hope that this will inform future policy development across relevant portfolios, including National Defence, Status of Women, Global Affairs, Public Safety, and International Trade.

Prepared by the Women, Peace, & Security Research Network

This report was generated by members of the Women, Peace, & Security Research Network. Created through a working group of experts, dialogue was initiated around what demilitarization means in the context of the WPS Agenda priorities in Canada. Contributors included academics, government officials, activists, and non-governmental organization representatives.

The aim of [the Research Network on Women, Peace and Security \(RN-WPS\)](#) Network is to mobilise Canadian-based expertise on issues related to the WPS agenda, and more broadly, to the intersections of militarism, (in)security, settler-colonialism, gender, race, sexuality and disability. It facilitates knowledge exchange among researchers working in Canadian institutions, supports and initiates innovative and multidisciplinary research, and diffuses results into academic, policy-making, and general public audience on three strategic challenges: Canada's Defence Relations, Climate Change, and Future Challenges.



Working Group Participants

The data presented in this report is compiled from comments and suggestions made by members of the working group but does not represent fully the various opinions of participants. The report does not claim that its summary reflects consensus from attendees, but rather the overarching and main ideas conveyed and reinforced by participants. The final report was drafted by Nicole Wegner and Megan MacKenzie, with assistance from Emma Fingler, and benefited from feedback on several drafts from members of the working group.

Ray Acheson

Rasha Jarhum

Paul Meyer

Erin Baines

Tamara Lorincz

Allison Pytlak

Colleen Bell

Megan MacKenzie

Heather Smith

Yolande Bouka

Elinor McNamee

Nicole Wegner

Theresa Dunn

Marilou McPhedran

Jennifer Welsh

Erin Hunt

Executive Summary

Militarization is a major barrier to promoting and realizing meaningful peace and security initiatives across various Canadian government policy sectors. While Canadian foreign policy initiatives have long focused on human security and, more recently, emphasized the need for feminist foreign policy principles, this report identifies why and how existing policy must prioritize demilitarization as a key principle upon which human security and feminist priorities can be achieved. Women, girls, and gender and sexual minorities disproportionately bear the negative impacts of global militarization, while corporations and powerful individuals (often wealthy, Western, white men) benefit from using military technologies and tactics to pursue security goals. Future policy initiatives must take seriously the need to imagine and implement WPS policies with demilitarization as a priority.

This report seeks to provide tangible recommendations generated from consultation with experts working in academia, policy development, and non-governmental organizations.

The recommendations of this report are aspirational and forward-looking, as the working group recognized the impact demilitarization will have on future generations, a key consideration when making policy for peace and security. Canada's policies must take seriously intergenerational equity, which is increasingly relevant in the context of climate change and colonization, and their negative impacts on future peace. We cannot reduce carbon emissions without demilitarization, and we cannot reconcile colonialism without also addressing militarization. Thus, there is urgency to address the long-term impacts of choices made in the name of peace and security for Canadians.

Key Recommendations for the Canadian Government

1. Prioritize **demilitarization** across all policy areas
2. Use '**feminism**' and feminist principles with integrity
3. Reinvest in **feminist strategies** (diplomacy, conflict prevention) as a core objective of Canadian foreign policy
4. Prioritize **intersectionality and inclusion** in WPS strategies, utilizing diverse participants, representatives, and consultants to shape future initiatives
5. **Fund institutions** and policies that will actively promote peace
6. **Limit military spending**, procurement, and international arms transfers; work towards defunding militarized institutions
7. **Fulfill existing international commitments** for global peace, including ratifying policies to address arms control and disarmament
8. **Address WPS in domestic contexts**, including in practices for addressing sexual violence in military and police institutions, and the role that government and military institutions play in perpetuating ongoing Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and colonial violence.

Recommendation 1: Prioritize Demilitarization across policy areas

Make demilitarization a guiding priority for achieving peace and security

Feminist scholarship is clear that women, girls, and gender minorities are uniquely and disproportionately disadvantaged by policies that are highly militarized. **Demilitarization is therefore a core requirement for addressing Canada's WPS priorities.**

There are 5 key elements of demilitarization: disarmament, conflict prevention, de-alliancing, decreasing military spending, and transforming military institutions. Each is outlined below.

Demilitarization **requires disarmament**. Women put disarmament and the reduction of military spending as key provisions in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, but existing priorities for WPS have moved away from this emphasis. Canada has refused to sign onto the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW has provisions for the full participation of women in nuclear disarmament and for the recognition of the disproportionately adverse impacts of nuclear weapons on women and girls. While Canada has claimed its NATO commitments preclude it from adhering to the TPNW, it could readily do this if it disavowed support for NATO's current reliance on nuclear deterrence. NATO members retain their sovereignty and can dissent on aspects of NATO policy without imperilling their membership in the Alliance.

Critically, demilitarization requires an **emphasis on conflict prevention**. Canada's current diplomatic capacity is weak and has been in decline for several years. The cadre of foreign service officers has increasingly been confined to headquarters in Ottawa rather than deployed abroad. Without the engagement of experienced and well-trained personnel, Canada cannot significantly advance the mediation of conflict and other forms of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Conflict prevention might include **de-alliancing**, which is understood as a shifting away from exclusive military relationships and moving toward fostering diplomatic and conflict prevention partnerships as first steps in addressing international challenges. Membership in NATO and NORAD can drive Canada to excessively increase military spending and the purchase of new weapons systems. Canada's prioritization of military alliances over diplomatic associations signals that militarization remains the dominant strategy of the Canadian government for addressing global insecurity.

Demilitarization must also involve **decreasing Canada's military spending**. According to the latest NATO defence expenditures report, military spending in Canada has increased from \$20 billion in 2015 to \$33 billion in 2021. In 2022, the federal government announced an additional \$8 billion for the defence budget. Procurement of costly weapons systems such as fighter jets, warships and armed drones are contraindicative for demilitarization but also detrimental for fostering policies to promote peace. An alternative strategy to address excessive military spending could involve publicizing the opportunity costs of investing in the military rather than social and environmental programs. Reducing and **re-allocating military spending to addressing human security concerns** is a necessary component of demilitarization.

Demilitarization may also require **transforming the skills of the military** from a mainly "war-fighting" orientation to instead prioritize activities such as de-mining, arms control verification, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Transforming and addressing harmful internal cultures of militarized institutions is also an act of demilitarization. This should include addressing evidence of systemic sexism and racism. Most immediately, for the CAF, this should include responding expeditiously to all 48 recommendations of Justice Arbour's 2022 external review, which focused on sexual misconduct in the CAF. It should also address the concerns raised by the (2022) Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination.

While **demilitarization may be a gradual process, it can be expediated** if Canada takes comprehensive action to support non-military, diplomatic, and holistic security policies to respond to existing global and domestic challenges.

Recommendation 2: Use 'Feminism' and Feminist Principles with Integrity

Define feminist goals and pursue them with intention

There is need for **improved clarity** by government and policy makers on what is meant when 'feminist' and 'feminism' is used in relation to WPS priorities. Feminist writer and scholar bell hooks declared, "the foundation of a future feminist struggle must be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression" (hooks 1984, 31). In short, **sexist oppression** is the target of feminist actions, but feminist principles also demand we pay attention to other forms of group oppression like racism, ableism, colonialism, and ageism as a part of an intersectional feminist outlook. As militarization is a process that upholds many of these forms of group oppression, **demilitarization must be a key area of focus for feminist action**. Canadian **WPS priorities must be invested in addressing systemic forms of discrimination**.

While there has been an uptake in political leaders and officials using "feminism" or "feminist commitments", it is often without context for what is meant by these terms or clear commitment to any specific feminist principles. This poses an issue of legitimacy when governments fail to take meaningful actions that align with intersectional feminist commitments and priorities. Participants of this working group raised concerns that current Canadian **WPS NAP priorities and Feminist Foreign Policies are not invested in women's emancipation as a primary goal**. Instead, across policies, women's rights and emancipation are justified in relation to other government priorities, most notably the emphasis on global poverty reduction or increasing security sector employees.

To be clear, feminism is **not** only about 'adding women' or 'diversifying' voices at the table, even though this is an important part of the package. Feminism is also about directly addressing structural oppressions, including sexism, racism, ableism, classism, and colonialism, that disproportionately impact groups of women, girls, and gender and sexual majorities in complex and intersectional ways.

Recommendation 3: Invest in Feminist Strategies

Reinvest in feminist strategies as core objective of Canadian foreign policy

Canada's government must be cautious not to conflate women's leadership with feminist leadership. **Having women leaders does not guarantee feminist strategies.** At the international level, Canada claims to champion "gender" within disarmament and security spaces, which often means "women's participation" rather than intersectional feminist concerns and commitments.

We recommend four key areas that could benefit from intersectional feminist strategies:

1. Renewed commitments to diplomacy and conflict,
2. Support for women and communities around the world fighting for rights and justice,
3. Development of feminist policies that extend beyond gender mainstreaming and the gender binary, and
4. Increased transparency about the role of intersectionality and gender-based analysis in shaping policy.

Feminist strategies for peace and security can be pursued by all genders and should involve a **renewed commitment to diplomacy**. A feminist approach to peace should, as a bottom line, assume that the use of force should not be the default national response to security threats and, instead, diplomacy should be valued. Canada must rethink and re-frame what diplomacy means across its various policy areas and must prioritize diplomacy as a key component of foreign policy practices. This includes stakeholder negotiations and non-militarized dialogue as a key strategy for international engagement. It also involves diversifying participants at all levels of diplomatic conversation.

Feminist strategies should include the Government of Canada supporting those feminist activists around the globe working towards meaningful peace, justice, and equality. Canada should lend financial, legal, and discursive **support to women and communities around the world fighting for rights and justice**. Efforts should be made to ensure that ODA and existing programs work not just with global NGOs but also with grassroots organizations.

Current feminist practices in government programming emphasize gender mainstreaming. An example is the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, intended to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed military and policewomen in UN peace operations. The Elsie Initiative aligns with other gender mainstreaming efforts undertaken by the UN, including the UN Department of Peace Operations' Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy and the Secretary General's System Wide Strategy on Gender Parity. While gender mainstreaming is an important avenue for pursuing women's rights- including in peace and security organizations- over-reliance on these mechanisms may not result in significant improvements for women's peace and security. A commitment to demilitarization by the government of Canada would instead see **renewed resources to diplomatic efforts and conflict prevention initiatives**, rather than solely focusing on increasing women's representation in security forces.

Going beyond the gender binary is likewise important in this context. In keeping with intersectional feminist principles and approaches, Canada's diplomatic efforts should not focus solely on women's participation but also recognising other gender identities and expressions and amplify the perspectives and participation of LGBTQIA+ people within the work for demilitarization and peacebuilding.

Finally, there must be more **transparency about the role that Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) plays in policy formation**. The framework's application and methodological structures are vague, and there are no obvious mechanisms to measure whether this training program is used effectively by policy analysts and decision makers. The methods and processes by which the framework has been applied are not publicly available. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess the significance and impact of GBA+ on policy formation.

Recommendation 4: Target Inclusion and Intersectionality

Prioritize intersectionality and inclusion in WPS strategies, utilizing diverse participants, representatives, and consultants to shape future initiatives

Intersectional feminist action requires participation by a diversity of stakeholders. Importantly, this requires the **inclusion of historically oppressed and marginalized groups**, including Indigenous women and girls, in assessing and planning for future policies on peace and security.

Indigenous communities have distinct and valuable perspectives on what constitutes peace and security and how peace and security can be achievement and maintained. Indigenous communities also face specific and enhanced forms of insecurity and existential threat due to colonization, over-policing, systemic racism, residential schools and stolen generations, and loss of land. **Treating Indigenous communities as experts on security and peace** is essential to an intersectional Canadian WPS approach.

Future WPS initiatives must actively recruit diverse perspectives. Many existing structural barriers can prevent or make it difficult for certain groups to be at the table for conversations about peace and security. There is **need for a human-centred approach to peace** that prioritizes a **human rights-based approach to demilitarization** that prioritizes human rights and dignity. There is an urgent **necessity to facilitate inclusive conversations**, which includes locally situated discussions and action plans for peace. To ensure representation in decision-making bodies diverse communities must be given space and respected as experts including migrants, immigrants, refugees, Indigenous and Black people, and youth.

Efforts to address inclusion and intersectionality in Canada's WPS priorities must also involve the **protection of human rights defenders, at home and aboard.** This includes addressing ongoing violence against human rights defenders in Canada by police and security forces.

Recommendation 5: Develop institutional capacity for peace

Fund institutions and policies that will actively promote peace

There is need to **critically assess our current institutions**, recognize their role in the military-industrial complex, and consider the limits of these institutions' capacity(s) to take meaningful actions for peace. This recommendation emphasizes **shifting resources from militarized expansion to resources that support peace**.

A three-pronged approach would involve reducing military spending, diverting funding to feminist strategies that address root causes of conflict, and creating institutions that promote peace, such as a **Department of Peace** (see Mehta 2019, Legge 2019). If Canada's foreign policy is primarily formulated through the Departments of Trade, Defence, and Global Affairs, there is a heavy bias towards militarized activities and a reduced capacity for innovative strategies for peace. It also skews existing normative frameworks towards assumptions that the use of force and increased military resources are necessary for Canadian security.

Existing feminist foreign policy initiatives contain inadequate overseas development assistance that does not prioritize women-led peacebuilding, instead often being diverted to multilateral institutions. There is need to **better support grassroots women's groups and land and human rights defenders when allocating resources for peace and security**.

At present, there is tremendous financial resources for defence and military research and limited funding for peace research. For example, Global Affairs Canada does not have a significant budget for supporting and sustaining policymaking and programs related to WPS, Youth Peace and Security (YPS), disarmament, and arms control in foreign policy. By contrast, GAC has provided \$1.6 billion over 20 years for defence and military research, including the MINDS and IDEAS programs. Developing institutional capacity for peace means that resources must be diverted, including **research for peace and grassroots-led peacebuilding require adequate financial support**.

Recommendation 6: Limit military funding and spending

Limit military spending, procurement, and international arms transfers; work towards defunding militarized institutions

Canada must not make short-term investments in militarized policies that have long term negative consequences for domestic and international security risks. Canada needs to balance existing military commitments – including to Ukraine – with non-military strategies and resources aimed at de-escalation and peace. Canada needs to reconsider the earmarked targets for military equipment procurement and divert this funding to other policy activities (such as ODA or non-militarized activities) that would better support meaningful peace in Canada and globally. Demilitarization strategies should include efforts to publicize and make transparent current military spending and priorities alongside efforts to reduce **the production, distribution, and sales of weapons within and from Canadian manufacturers**. These objectives can best be attained through better accountability and transparency regarding arms transfers and policies as well as a clear understanding of Canada's existing military commitments.

What do we know about how much Canada spends on arms and where those arms go?

Canada ranks 17th in the world of arms exporters, with 0.5% of the share of global arms exports from 2017-2021. Canada ranks 30th for top arms buyers, with 0.9% of the share of global arms imports for 2017 to 2021. Canada is among the top two largest importers of major arms in the Americas region, accounting for 15% of the regional total (the United States accounts for 43%).

Canada's reliance on arms sales and manufacturing, particularly its relationship with Saudi Arabia, is of concern. There are over 21,000 signatories to [Amnesty International's call for Canada to stop selling Arms to Saudi Arabia](#), citing an extremely high risk that the products being sold – Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs) – are being used against civilians, specifically in the Yemen conflict. This has been echoed by

[Project Ploughshares and Amnesty International](#). They argue that Canada may be breaking international law, notably the Arms Trade Treaty with the export agreement they have with Saudi Arabia, due to the use of LAVs in the Yemen conflict. Ottawa has countered that the exports pose “no substantial risk,” however [others](#) argue that Canada could be complicit in human rights violations. [Human Rights Watch](#) highlighted Canada’s arms transfers to Saudi Arabia as a major issue, noting that they are “helping to fuel the conflict” in Yemen.

Canada has committed to purchasing 88 advanced fighter jets, the negotiations of which were finalized in early 2023. The Canadian Foreign Policy Institute [highlighted the impact](#) of such purchases on climate change. The resources earmarked for this purchase would be better put towards pandemic recovery, transition to clean energies and investment in Indigenous communities.

The contribution of arms sales and manufacturing to Canada’s GDP is noteworthy. In 2020, [\\$9.2 billion in GDP was produced by Canada’s defence ministry](#), while business domains contributed \$12.6 billion in military revenues. Procurement remains a significant portion of Canada’s military spending at 14 per cent, which amounted to \$3.1 billion in 2019-20 (data is only released biennially). Canada recently announced that in 2023-24 it will pass the 20% NATO threshold of military spending on major equipment, which sits at 17.7% in 2021-22.

What are some of Canada’s immediate military commitments? Militarization in Ukraine and the Arctic

Canada’s role in Ukraine has been visible since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the Donbas war in 2014, but it has increased considerably since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In January 2022, in anticipation of Russia’s aggression, Canada expanded Operation UNIFIER, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) mission to provide military training and support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The federal budget further expanded Canada’s support to Ukraine, announcing more than \$500 million in additional military aid in 2022-23. That amount has risen to \$1 billion in total military assistance since February 2022.

Project Ploughshares has reported that government to government military transfers has amounted to \$240 million thus far, including lethal and non-lethal equipment, such as the enhancement of cyber-security.

In this context of militarization, it must be acknowledged that Ukrainians - including Ukrainian feminists - have been calling for international military support to stop the immediate deadly threat of Russian military aggression. Military forms of support cannot be offered as the sole solution to this situation. A range of non-military strategies that set de-escalation, diplomacy, and justice as the ultimate long-term goals are needed. Any decision on this matter must respect the agency of Ukraine. To do so, it is essential that Canada works closely with Ukrainian women directly affected by the Russian invasion and supports grassroots feminist civil society organizations that have been forced to reorient their activities towards crisis management and humanitarian assistance in the past year. Canada must continue its important work in gathering evidence and supporting victims of wartime sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers to bring them justice and combat impunity. Moreover, Canada should also strongly support Ukraine when future peace agreements and reconstruction plans eventually occur, in which Ukrainian women should be present at all stages.

Feminist experts have been clear that **the war in Ukraine cannot be won by militarization alone** (solely increasing arms transfers to Ukraine), and there is an urgent need to equally pay attention to human rights, diplomatic solutions, and supporting gender justice, key facets to challenging Russian imperialist discourses and activities (Bias 2022). Considering Putin's nuclear threats, feminists also highlight the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) ratification** as a key strategy in demilitarizing existing tensions and avoiding the catastrophic consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would have.

There is ongoing concern about militarization in the Arctic region. While Canada is only one of eight countries located in the Arctic region, there have been concerns that Canada has not pushed disarmament or raised the issue in Arctic states' agenda-setting dialogues (Exner-Pirot 2020).

In a recent visit to Canada, NATO Secretary-General [Jens Stoltenberg called on Canada](#) to meet the two percent military funding commitment to NATO operations. During the same press conference, Stoltenberg also emphasized the need to support efforts to increase militarism in the Arctic. Canada should be wary of such activities, which not only encourage militarization, but also increase tensions in the region.

Recommendation 7: Follow through on existing commitments for global peace

Fulfill existing international disarmament commitments for global peace, including ratifying policies to address arms control and taking action to stop the development of autonomous weapons systems

Canada must follow through on existing international commitments for global disarmament. Among others, this includes treaties and agreements on landmines, small arms, and nuclear weapons. Canada must also take urgent action to address the development and use of autonomous weapon systems.

In relation to landmines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war, Canada should continue to **invest in and support mine clearance activities and victim assistance**. In these activities, women and girls should be actively involved at all levels of policy direction. Canada joined the 2022 Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. As part of this, Canada must **develop policy to support the Declaration**. A future policy direction might include investing in assistance provision for victims of explosive weapons.

Canada has acceded to the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (2019) and signed but not ratified the Inter-American Convention on Firearms (1997). Canada has signed and ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UN CTOC) [2000] and signed **but not ratified** the addition to the convention: the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and

Ammunition (the Firearms Protocol) [2005]. **Ratification of these protocols and treaties must be prioritized.**

On nuclear disarmament, Canada has signed and ratified the following treaties: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (1998), International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2013), Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1969), Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1964), Antarctic Treaty (1988), and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment (2013). However, Canada has yet to sign the leading treaty in this area: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This is a key initiative for global nuclear disarmament and Canada is missing an opportunity to show leadership in signing this initiative.

Furthermore, **Canada's lack of action on the TPNW is undermining its own legal obligations and political commitments to nuclear disarmament.** This lack of action is facilitating the risk and dangers of nuclear war by supporting the retention of nuclear weapons by its allies and is delaying the deployment of a nuclear deterrence doctrine within NATO.

Autonomous weapons, or killer robots, are an emerging technology with the capacity to kill targets without operator consent. There is currently a UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that has met for years in Geneva under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to discuss how to address the risks and challenges posed by autonomous weapon systems. In 2019, the Canadian Prime Minister issued a government mandate for the foreign ministry to support the development of a **ban on autonomous weapons**. However, the Canadian delegation to the GGE has instead chosen to support the [US-led proposal](#) for voluntary guidelines on autonomous weapon development, which contains loopholes about the level of oversight required for deploying an autonomous weapons system (Human Rights Watch 2023). Canada's support of the US proposal also is in opposition to the majority of states participating in the GGE who support legally binding prohibitions and restrictions on these technologies. The US, Russia, Israel, and a handful of other governments have been blocking progress at the CCW on this issue as they actively develop these weapons. Canada is facilitating these activities by refusing to support a

ban on weapons that pose inherent risks for international humanitarian law, human rights, human dignity, and ethics.

Finally, disarmament activities require more diverse participation. At all levels, from demining to chemical weapons verification to international diplomatic committees, there is a stark underrepresentation of women, girls, and gender diverse individuals. There is urgent need for diverse perspectives and participation from grassroots initiatives to high-level negotiations on international disarmament.

Canada must take leadership and formally endorse international commitments and initiatives for disarmament through ratification of existing initiatives, supporting the development of future treaties, and working towards policies that can support victims of existing armament technologies.

Recommendation 8: Address WPS priorities in a domestic context

Address sexual, racist, and colonial violence within and by Canada's security sector institutions

Canada's WPS strategies generally are focused on external activities while overlooking peace and security issues domestically. Without addressing domestic forms of insecurity, Canada's ability to champion the WPS agenda globally as a normative leader is compromised. WPS must be implemented across security sector policies of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to address ongoing gendered violence that exists within and extends beyond these institutions. Three key areas of concern are: **sexism and racism in Canada's security sectors, including the CAF and RCMP; ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls across Canadian provinces and territories (MMIWG); and disproportionately high levels of Indigenous incarceration.**

The violence committed by the CAF and the RCMP against Indigenous Peoples, especially women and girls, must be systematically and comprehensively addressed.

There is history of asymmetrical force used by police against Indigenous women, most recently identified by journalists working with land defenders in British Columbia and the use of surveillance and scare tactics against Indigenous women in their homes and communities (Amnesty International 2020). In addition, there is demonstrated instances of sexual exploitation of Indigenous girls and women at the hands of police, occurring across several provinces (Human Rights Watch 2017). This issue has received minimal policy attention yet requires multi-level, comprehensive policy action to address unconscious bias and racism, increase cultural sensitivity, increase disciplinary action against perpetrators, and emphasize the links between harms committed within Indigenous communities and Canada's history of oppressive colonial policies.

One key area of concern to domestic peace and security issues is the over-representation of Indigenous women in the Canadian prison system. Indigenous women comprise less than five per cent of the population in Canada yet represent 50 per cent of incarcerated women in Canada (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2022). Indigenous people are more likely to be subjected to force by correctional officers, put into structured intervention, placed in maximum security, labelled as gang members, and commit self-harm in custody. There is strong correlation between poverty, racism, and incarceration in Canada. There is also long-standing mistrust of police by Indigenous communities. While the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Final Report (2017) have addressed these links, there is need to institutionalize this awareness, particularly within militarized institutions.

Possible solutions for addressing violence against Indigenous women would be to make police funding contingent upon the inclusion of comprehensive education on sexism, racism, and colonial violence, a condition that should be **required for employment and promotion** in the RCMP and CAF, including cultural sensitivity training. This recommendation is made with hesitation, since there is evidence that equity and educational reform within institutions like the CAF and RCMP has not been successful in the past and that working towards abolition or defunding of these institutions may be more in line with the goals for reducing violence against Indigenous communities in Canada.

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