



MODERATOR OF THE 2019 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Rev. Amanda Currie, B.A.Sc., M.Div.

July 6, 2020

The Honourable Harjit Sajjan P.C., M.P.
Minister of National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers,

I write to you on behalf of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, whose 2019 General Assembly met in Waterloo, Ontario.

Our General Assembly considered reports on several international issues, including the Arms Trade Treaty. The church has consistently advocated for adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. We commend the government for acceding to the Treaty and efforts to align Canadian laws and policies with the Arms Trade Treaty, which Canada ratified on June 19, 2019, including improvements to reporting transparency of arms exports.

Canadian arms exports in 2018 were record breaking and half of Canadian exports are to the United States. The church is concerned that exports to the United States are not subject to the level of transparency required by the Arms Trade Treaty and have remained largely off the record. We strongly encourage your Government to ensure Canadian legislation and all bilateral agreements accord with the Arms Trade Treaty. We encourage the Government of Canada to publish the number of utilized export permits and, in cases where permits are rejected, the reason for the rejection.

In the interest of full transparency, our General Assembly also recommends that reports by the Government regarding allegations of the use of Canadian-made military vehicles by Saudi forces against civilians in eastern Saudi Arabia be made public. This would go a long way to substantiate Minister Freeland's claim that there is "no conclusive evidence that Canadian-made vehicles were used in human rights violations."¹

¹ Speech by the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Global Affairs Canada, February 8, 2018, Ottawa.
https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2018/02/speech_by_the_honourablechrystiafreelandministerofforeignaffairs.html?wbdisable=true

The lifting of the moratorium for exports to Saudi Arabia is deeply troubling. Put in place following the extrajudicial murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and given the vulnerabilities of the Yemeni people during what the UN has described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, lifting the moratorium for the export of military equipment to the largest proponent of the Yemeni conflict seems untimely. How will the Government of Canada ensure that Canadian made military equipment is not used against its own or Yemeni citizens by Saudi Arabia?

Thank you for your attention to this letter. Rest assured of our continuing prayers, even and amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Currie".

Rev. Amanda Currie
Moderator
The 2019 General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir