



**Laureates:**

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)  
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)  
Jody Williams, USA (1997)  
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)  
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)  
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

**OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

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

**1 May 2020**

Dear Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

As Nobel Peace laureates, we are deeply concerned by Canada lifting its moratorium on military exports to Saudi Arabia. Although we applaud Canada's recent decision to extend, indefinitely, its ban on new arms exports to Turkey, a similar ban must remain in place for Saudi Arabia.

On April 8, Saudi Arabia declared a two-week ceasefire in Yemen. The next day, in the midst of a global pandemic and as Yemen announced its first COVID-19 case, Canada announced it would lift its military equipment ban to Riyadh—and resume exports of light-armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia. This contradicts your government's support of the UN Secretary General's appeal for a global ceasefire.

Your government had, rightfully, suspended the sale of military equipment to Saudi Arabia following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. Unfortunately, the human rights situation inside Saudi Arabia has not changed.

Saudi-Arabia holds one of the worst human rights records in the world. It is also a leading player in the protracted conflict in Yemen, which has resulted in the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Thousands of civilians have been killed and injured, and tens of millions of people experience food insecurity and are on the brink of famine.

*Advocating for peace, justice and equality*

We strongly believe that instead of arming Saudi Arabia, Canada should focus on the ceasefire and its very narrow window for peace, by investing resources and diplomatic expertise in an inclusive process to bring relief and lasting peace to Yemen.

Resuming arms sales during a global pandemic—or at any time—does not reflect positively on Canada’s feminist leadership. On the contrary, it further endangers ordinary civilians inside Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in particular, women.

We call on Canada to live up to its own commitment to “put armed conflict on lockdown” by:

- Re-instating, immediately, the freeze on all military exports to Saudi Arabia and put an end to the arms deal.
- Calling on all warring parties to abide by the UN call for a global ceasefire.
- Ensuring the safety of women calling for peace.
- Working to keep peace processes alive and build peace during this global pandemic.

Canada cannot call itself a global leader for peace while simultaneously supplying weapons of war.

Sincerely,

Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Laureate (2011) – Yemen  
Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate (2003) – Iran  
Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate (2011) – Liberia  
Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate, (1976) – Northern Ireland  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate (1992) – Guatemala  
Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1997) – USA

Cc:

The Honorable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister  
The Honorable Francois-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs

