



**Mennonite Central Committee Canada**

Office of the Executive Director  
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Winnipeg, MB Canada R3C CZ5

**The Honourable Bill Blair, P.C., M.P.**

Minister of National Defence  
House of Commons Canada  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

September 21, 2023

Dear Minister Blair,

On behalf of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, I congratulate you on your newly appointed cabinet position as Minister of National Defense. I offer you our prayers as you continue to govern. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) looks forward to working with you and your team.

As a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist Christian churches, MCC works to share God's love and compassion in the name of Christ by responding to basic needs and working for peace and justice, in Canada and in over 45 countries around the world. Our faith calls us to imagine and work for a world where all can live at peace with God, with one another, and with creation.

Based on our century of experience, we are passionate about the power of peacebuilding to make a tangible difference in areas dealing with conflict. For MCC peace is more than a wish, it is our work. MCC programs use a triple nexus approach to provide peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and community development and we encourage the Canadian government to adopt a similar approach, especially when it comes to responding to situations of conflict, such as Ukraine or Haiti.

MCC currently co-chairs, along with the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program, the Canadian Peacebuilding Partners Network (CPPN). The network's objective is to facilitate policy dialogue on conflict prevention, stabilization, and peacebuilding between Canadian civil society and Global Affairs Canada, exchange knowledge, encourage collaboration and ultimately enhance Canada's collective efforts.

MCC encourages the Canadian government to invest more international assistance efforts and funds to local peacebuilding initiatives as an alternative to increased military spending or military interventions, in locations such as Haiti. As conversations grow around Canada's NATO commitments internationally, combined with the need to reduce government spending, we would encourage bold leadership focused on peace, rather than an increase in NATO or in weapons technology, from your department.

We would also encourage care in ensuring Canada follows our international conventions. For example, while we welcome Canada's condemnation of the sale of cluster munitions to Ukraine, we note that cluster munitions can be used with Canadian supplied weaponry.

We also encourage conversations with your fellow Ministers in the departments of Foreign Affairs, International Development, and Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development to work together to develop a comprehensive approach to Canada's international engagement that fulfills the commitment to a feminist foreign policy, that focuses on violence prevention and conflict resolution, alternatives to militarization, and support for grassroots civil society.

We are eager to work together towards our shared goals of a world where everyone can live in peace and dignity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Bauman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Cober Bauman  
Executive Director  
Mennonite Central Committee Canada

CC: Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
Brian May, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence  
James Bezan, Shadow Minister for National Defence, Conservative Party of Canada  
Lindsay Mathyssen, Critic for National Defence, New Democratic Party  
Christine Normandin, Critic for National Defence, Bloc Quebecois  
Elizabeth May, Co-Leader, Green Party