

Open letter: Military Strikes against Iran

March 20, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada
Parliament of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Anita Anand, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Parliament of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Stephen Fuhr, PC, MP
Secretary of State (Defence Procurement)
Parliament of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Prime Minister Carney, Minister Anand, and State Secretary Fuhr,

We are concerned members of the Women, Peace and Security community in Canada. We are part of a volunteer network of expert feminists working in policy, research, advocacy, and development. We are committed to ensuring the equitable, consistent, and principled application of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Canada and around the world.

We are deeply alarmed by reports that Canada has expressed support for the recent military strikes carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran. These strikes represent a dangerous escalation of violence in an already fragile region and raise serious concerns regarding the violation of international law and the erosion of diplomatic norms.

Prime Minister Carney recently stated that Canada, as a middle power, should not blindly follow geopolitical hegemony or endorse unprovoked war. Yet the attacks on Iran occurred in the midst of ongoing diplomatic negotiations, with mediators reporting that Iran had signalled willingness to reduce aspects of its civilian nuclear programme. The decision to launch military strikes during an active diplomatic process undermines international efforts toward peaceful conflict resolution.

International law and the United Nations Charter prohibit the use of force against another state except in cases of self-defence or with authorization from the UN Security Council. Military strikes undertaken outside these frameworks constitute a serious breach of the international legal order that Canada has long claimed to uphold.

Reports emerging from the initial hours of the strikes indicate devastating civilian harm, including the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the deaths of innocent children following the bombing of a girls' elementary school. These actions raise grave concerns under international humanitarian law, which requires the protection of civilians and prohibits attacks that cause disproportionate civilian casualties.

At a time when the global rules-based order is increasingly under strain, Canada must demonstrate consistency in its commitment to international law. Canada has previously defended its right to respond firmly to economic coercion and sanctions imposed by other states. Yet denying Iran the right to defend itself against an unprovoked military attack while supporting those attacks risks undermining Canada's credibility as a defender of international norms.

As members of Canada's Women, Peace and Security community, we are deeply concerned that continued escalation will only increase instability, civilian suffering, and the risk of broader regional conflict.

We therefore call on the Government of Canada to:

- Publicly condemn the military strikes carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran;
- Call for an immediate end to hostilities and for all parties to exercise restraint;
- Support the continuation of diplomatic negotiations to resolve nuclear concerns through peaceful means; and
- Reaffirm Canada's commitment to international law and the United Nations Charter.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons requires credible international cooperation and consistent global standards. We therefore also urge Canada to demonstrate leadership by supporting global nuclear disarmament efforts, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Canada should be a voice for diplomacy, de-escalation, and the protection of civilian life. At a moment when tensions in the Middle East risk spiralling further, Canada must uphold the principles of international law and the pursuit of peaceful solutions.

Signed by:

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