

Advocacy group reports Canada's planned fighter jet purchase will top \$77B

By: No Fighter Jets Coalition-- Feb. 25, 2021

[A report produced by the No Fighter Jets Coalition](#)

estimates that the real cost of the planned purchase of 88 new fighter jets by the Canadian government will total \$77 billion. The government has stated the cost would be no more than \$19 billion, but the report makes clear this number is only the sticker price. Acquiring the jets would commit Canada to spending billions more than the Liberals have publicly announced.

The report, published on Thursday, is based on official Department of National Defense reports and a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives investigation produced during the last attempted purchase of new jets.

According to the report, essential operations costs, including the cost of jet fuel, training, and maintenance, have been left out of the government's public estimate.

In 2012, the Harper government tried to purchase 65 F-35s from Lockheed Martin. Their stated price tag was \$9 billion. The Spring 2012 Auditor General's report suggested that information about the true cost was being withheld from the public [1]. An independent investigation requested by the government subsequently found that the total cost of the purchase would come to over \$45 billion. Public scrutiny rose and the purchase was stopped [2].

"Canadians took major issues with the misleading sticker price in the last attempted jet purchase, when the majority of true costs were omitted," Emma McKay, a coalition member, said. "The Liberals are making the same mistakes."

This is the latest of many concerns about the purchase raised by the No Fighter Jets Coalition, whose main issue is that the jets will carry bombs and fire missiles that kill civilians and destroy critical infrastructure, leaving large numbers of people without essentials like safe drinking water.

"The jets have nothing to do with ensuring security for Canada," says Rachel Small, Canada Organizer with World BEYOND War. "They're designed to do the same thing the last generation of jets did in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and Syria – carry bombs and missiles that kill civilians, disproportionately children, prolong violent conflict, and contribute to massive humanitarian and refugee crises."

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(From last column) Canada's fighter jet purchase

Another concern is about the impact on Indigenous rights: Dene land defenders maintain that test flights at the Cold Lake air base, where many of the new fighter jets would be stationed, negatively impact their community [3]. The coalition is also concerned about climate impact: F-35s, the front-runner in the current competition, use 5600 liters of carbon-rich fuel per flight hour [4].

The report emphasizes the risk in the estimated cost. Should inflation rates and the cost of jet fuel increase, it says, the cost could increase by billions. It also says there are limitations to their estimates, which are based on F-35 operations costs. If the government decides to purchase Boeing's Super Hornet or SAAB's Gripen, the costs could decrease somewhat.

Simon Daley, another member of the coalition, highlighted other uses of the money: "Clean water for every First Nation in Canada would cost less than \$5 billion. Water is essential—war is not."

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The PDF of the report and more information about the No Fighter Jets Coalition is available at nofighterjets.ca.

[1] Office of the Auditor General of Canada. 2012. 2012 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada. [link](#)

[2] CTV News. Dec 2012. F-35 deal would cost \$45.8 billion; feds hit 'reset button'. *CTV News*. [link](#)

[3] Brent Patterson. Aug 2020. Dene land defender Brian Grandbois and the struggle against the Cold Lake air force base. *rabble.ca* [link](#)

[4] Tamara Lorincz. May 12, 2020. Spending \$19 billion on fighter jets won't fight COVID-19 or climate change.

Ricochet media. [link](#)

No exceptions or special circumstances can justify the murder of a living person. Murder is the most vulgar violation of the Law of God as it is expressed in all religious teachings and in a peoples' conscience.

Leo Tolstoy

Intellect can be enlightened only in a kind person. A person can be kind only when he has an enlightened intellect. One helps the other. *Chinese Wisdom*

The world faces a pandemic of human rights abuses in the wake of Covid-19

From the Guardian: Mon 22 Feb 2021

By: António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

From the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic almost one year ago, it was clear that our world faced far more than a public health emergency. The biggest international crisis in generations quickly morphed into an economic and social crisis. One year on, another stark fact is tragically evident: our world is facing a pandemic of human rights abuses.

Covid-19 has deepened pre-existing divides, vulnerabilities and inequalities, and opened up new fractures, including fault lines in human rights. The pandemic has revealed the interconnectedness of our human family – and of the full spectrum of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. When any one of these rights is under attack, others are at risk.

The virus has thrived because poverty, discrimination, the destruction of our natural environment and other human rights failures have created enormous fragilities in our societies. The lives of hundreds of millions of families have been turned upside down – with lost jobs, crushing debt and steep falls in income.

Frontline workers, people with disabilities, older people, women, girls and minorities have been especially hard hit. In a matter of months, progress on gender equality has been set back decades. Most essential frontline workers are women, and in many countries are often from racially and ethnically marginalised groups.

Most of the increased burden of care in the home is taken on by women. Violence against women and girls in all forms has rocketed, from online abuse to domestic violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation and child marriage.

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Extreme poverty is rising for the first time in decades.

Young people are struggling, out of school and often with limited access to technology.

The latest moral outrage is the failure to ensure equity in vaccination efforts. Just 10 countries have administered more than 75% of all Covid-19 vaccines. Meanwhile, more than 130 countries have not received a single dose.

If the virus is allowed to spread like wildfire in parts of the global south, it will mutate again and again. New variants could become more transmissible, more deadly and potentially threaten the effectiveness of current vaccines and diagnostics. This could prolong the pandemic significantly, enabling the virus to come back to plague the global north – and delay the world's economic recovery. The virus is also infecting political and civil rights, and further shrinking civic space. Using the pandemic as a pretext, authorities in some countries have deployed heavy-handed security responses and emergency measures to crush dissent, criminalise basic freedoms, silence

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(From last column) **abuses in the wake of Covid-19** independent reporting and restrict the activities of nongovernmental organisations.

Human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, political activists – even medical professionals – have been detained, prosecuted and subjected to intimidation and surveillance for criticising government responses to the pandemic. Pandemic-related restrictions have been used to subvert electoral processes and weaken opposition voices.

At times, access to life-saving Covid-19 information has been concealed while deadly misinformation has been amplified – even by those in power.

Extremists – including white supremacists and neo-Nazis – have exploited the pandemic to boost their ranks through social polarisation and political and cultural manipulation.

The pandemic has also made peace efforts more difficult, constraining the ability to conduct negotiations, exacerbating humanitarian needs and undermining progress on other conflict-related human rights challenges.

Covid-19 has reinforced two fundamental truths about human rights. First, human rights violations harm us all. Second, human rights are universal and protect us all.

An effective response to the pandemic must be based on solidarity and cooperation. Divisive approaches, authoritarianism and nationalism make no sense against a global threat. With the pandemic shining a spotlight on human rights, recovery provides an opportunity to generate momentum for transformation. To succeed, our approaches must have a human rights lens.

The sustainable development goals – which are underpinned by human rights – provide the framework for more inclusive and sustainable economies and societies, including the imperative of healthcare for everyone.

The recovery must also respect the rights of future generations, enhancing climate action to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and protecting biodiversity. My Call to Action for Human Rights spells out the central role of human rights in crisis response, gender equality, public participation, climate justice and sustainable development.

This is not a time to neglect human rights; it is a time when, more than ever, human rights are needed to navigate this crisis in a way that will allow us to zero in on achieving inclusive and sustainable development and lasting peace.

We are all in this together. The virus threatens everyone. Human rights uplift everyone. By respecting human rights in this time of crisis, we will build more effective and equitable solutions for the emergency of today and the recovery for tomorrow.

I am convinced it is possible – if we are determined and work together.

In the end we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Even if people do not know what real kindness is, they nevertheless have it within them. *Confucius*

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.

After January 29: Let us usher in a new era, together

By: Ehab Lotayef Published Jan. 2021 in Rabble.ca

It is always with a heavy heart that one approaches the anniversary of the Quebec City mosque attack on January 29. I am still in some sort of denial that such a terrorist incident could have happened so close to home. It is difficult to believe that such hate exists in the province I call home, where my children grew up, where I have made friendships, built relationships and lived for the better part of my life.

But, in the midst of these thoughts and feelings, I always remind myself that life is full of surprises: the good ones and the bad. Hate, crime, and hardships are an integral part of human history. At the end of the day, it would be best for each one of us to focus on one thing: how can I make tomorrow better than today.

At this time, when Trump recently left the White House, one cannot help but be optimistic. Yet, naive optimism can be a problem. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to make ours a better world, and only if we undertake that work will we be helping the situation.

In addition to commemorating the incident on January 29, 2017, honouring the victims' lives and vowing that, as a society, we will not forget, we have to work to eliminate the root causes of what happened on that dark night, four years ago.

One of the ways to tackle the root causes of the hate and ignorance that led to what happened in 2017 was establishing Muslim Awareness Week (MAW). There are so many Muslims living in Quebec. They are quite diverse, they differ in many ways and disagree about many things, but in their vast majority they are decent, hard working and educated and they contribute positively to society. We need to know them; you need to know them. MAW provides such an opportunity. It is not a religious event intended to inform you about Islam the religion. It is a series of events that introduce Muslim people to you: women, men, and youth. Workers, professionals, activists, students, artists, homemakers; you name it. The goal is to tell you more about this community

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(From last column) **Let us usher in a new era,** that lives with you, among you, serves you and is served by you; a community that needs you and is needed by you.

Yet MAW and similar strategies are not the only way to tackle the root causes of what happened on January 29, 2017. We cannot ignore the damage that politicians do to the social fabric of society, which can lead to drastic results. Trump did it in the U.S. in a way that no one can ignore. Our politicians here, in Quebec, are also setting precedents that are very dangerous and can lead to great harm in the short and the long run. If we accept discrimination against people, by law, based on what they choose to believe in or wear (not because it is indecent, offensive or hinders their ability to perform their jobs), we are creating a two-tier society in which the unimaginable can happen.

This is why another way to contribute to our society's health is to stand up against laws like Law 21 (formerly Bill 21). We should all be against it, not because it affects you or someone you know directly, but because it creates a society you do not want to live in or pass along to your children. Because it violates charters of rights (both the Canadian and Quebec charters) which many have dedicated their lives to creating and upholding over generations. Movements like "Non a la loi 21" (NL21) are another way to eradicate the root causes of what happened in the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec in 2017, before similar catastrophes occur.

No one can guarantee that a massacre like the ones that happened in Quebec City in 2017, in Pittsburgh in 2018 or in Christchurch in 2019 will never be repeated, but doing our part will considerably reduce the probability of something like this happening again, to any group -- in Quebec, Canada, or anywhere in the world.

Ehab Lotayef is an IT manager at McGill University. He is a founder and former chairperson of "Muslim Awareness Week" and the former coordinator of "Non a la loi 21" campaign.

Pushing for political leadership on Islamophobia from Trudeau to Legault

By: Ehab Lotayef Published Feb. 23, 2021 in Rabble.ca

It was with a pleasant sense of surprise that I received news of the Canadian government designating January 29 a "National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia."

The news took me back to the election campaign of 2015. At the time the NDP was the official opposition and the Liberals the "third party." An ad-hoc group of organizations communicated with party leaders, asking them for their positions on a variety of issues, including racism and the protection of minorities. In his **response**, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau avoided using the word Islamophobia. Over the following year he continued to avoid using it, but ever since January 29, 2017, he has been using it candidly.

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WHAT'S UP?



The BPI looks forward to hosting **Peace In, Peace Out!** on **Sept. 24-25th 2021** at the Grand Forks USCC Community Centre, although it **depends on Covid-19** if it will be possible. If you have a talent to share contact Dave at dave@davesoroka.com or you wish to volunteer, donate to the Silent Auction or for more information contact Laura at L4peace@telus.net. Watch for announcements.

Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation presented Ed Lehman, a friend of the BPI, with the Global Citizens Award for global cooperation, peace and social justice. Congratulations on this well deserved recognition for your work and dedication and of the peace and justice movement as a whole. Well done!

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Go to the Government of Canada website for MP contact information at <http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles are the author's responsibility and may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI works with local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups: is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Peace Pledge Union, Abolition 2000 and CNANW.

(From page 3) **political leadership on Islamophobia**

After the 2017 mosque massacre in Quebec City the stakes were higher, though. Many started to ask for January 29 to be designated a day of action against Islamophobia, but these demands seemed to be falling on deaf ears. Regardless of whether the day was designated for combating Islamophobia or not, work on the ground started and was continued by many groups and individuals, throughout the year, but concentrated around the anniversary of the massacre. I have always been of the **opinion** that asking alone would not get us what we need. It is only when the people lead that the politicians will follow. We learned from history that no one gave Black people Black History Month; they established it themselves. No one gave the LGBTQ+ community Pride; they made it a fact on the ground. And we made January 29 a Day of Action Against Islamophobia through work done year after year, and now the politicians affirmed it.

The story does not end here, unfortunately. Xenophobes and populist politicians are digging in their heels even deeper now. There are some who can't accept seeing vocal representatives of minorities in certain positions. They legislate exclusion (e.g. Law 21 in Quebec) while they continue to claim there is no systemic racism. They make **allegations** against individuals (e.g. Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet's insinuation that Transport Minister Omar Alghabra had a relationship with "the political Islamic movement") and call them "just questions."

The premier of "all Quebecers" responded to the announcement of the Day of Action Against Islamophobia by saying, on January 29 of all days, that there is no "undercurrent" of Islamophobia in Quebec.

The federal designation of a day against Islamophobia does not solve these problems, but it gives us a tool to use and strengthens our hand in working towards fixing the situation. The only way these problems can be solved is through education and confronting misinformation. We should use the opportunity to try to reach *monsieur et madame tout-le-monde* and get them to know the other, creating a better chance of acceptance and harmony. For this we need the help of the media, the educational system and many segments of society and levels of government. The designation of the day helps with all this.

It is a long road but, as a society, we have no other options because the alternative is a real disaster.

Just as Canada has accepted that Islamophobia exists, so too will Quebec, if we do our job. They will accept it without considering that it is singling out Quebec or that this scars its reputation.

When people change their views, when they know more, when they accept the other, there will be no place for populist governments or xenophobic politicians. Either they will be voted out, or they will choose to change, following the majority of people and accepting that there is a problem that needs to be solved.

Ehab Lotayef is an IT manager at McGill University. He is a founder and former chairperson of "Muslim Awareness Week" and the former coordinator of "Non a la loi 21" campaign.

Stop robbing others before you give money to beggars. With the same hand that we rob one person, we reward another, giving to the poor the money which we have taken from the even poorer. Better no charity than this kind of charity.

Saint John Chrysostom

A rich man cannot be merciful. If he becomes really merciful, he will quickly lose his riches.

Leo Tolstoy