

CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

Web site: www.vowpeace.org

May 16, 2021

Hon. Justin Trudeau, MP

Prime Minister

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: To end the violence in Gaza and the West Bank, cease all arms exports and commercial contracts with Israel and support women's efforts for peace

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The Canadian Voice of Women (VOW) condemns the Government of Canada's refusal to expressly denounce the State of Israel's violence against Palestinians in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. The Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau issued on May 12 and his social media posts on May 15, failed to acknowledge the violent and illegal actions committed by the Israeli police, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and Israeli settlers against the Palestinian people. Minister Garneau's statement and tweets do not mention Israel's violence against Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque and its ongoing, brutal occupation of Palestinian territory. Though the statement does mention the home demolitions and evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, it does not explain that it is Palestinians who are losing their homes and does not criticize Israel for these illegal actions.

In recognition of the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba, VOW writes this statement to express our solidarity and support for Palestinian human rights and for a just peace in the Middle East. Last week, more than 300 Palestinians were injured after Israeli police stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque. VOW notes that since the beginning of this year, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported that Israeli authorities have demolished or seized at least 292 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 450 people, including 246 children.

VOW is deeply saddened by the news of people who have been injured or killed over this past week. Israeli's air strikes have killed almost 200 Palestinians, including 58 children and 34 women. In Israel, seven people have been killed including a child by Hamas' rockets. VOW is opposed to the use of force and all forms of violence. Yet, we know that Israel is the 14th highest for military spending in the world and spends

(Continued next column)

VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

annually \$21 billion for its highly advanced army that is supported by \$3.8 billion in US military aid. Israel has pounded Gaza with laser guided bombs that have destroyed homes, schools, media outlets, medical facilities and civilian infrastructure, which are war crimes. Hamas does not have a military, but some rockets, which were largely disabled by Israel's missile defense system before reaching Israel. The Palestinians in Gaza who are legitimately represented by the government of Hamas do not have a functioning state, but live in an "open air prison" with limited electricity and inadequate social services because of the harsh, illegal blockade by Israel.

To help end the ongoing violence, VOW calls on the Canadian government to immediately cease all arms exports to Israel. Every year, Canada permits millions of dollars' worth of exports of weapons including automatic rifles and carbines to the Israeli security forces that are used against Palestinians.

VOW also calls on the federal government to cancel all subsidies and contracts with Israeli companies. VOW is appealing to federal Minister of Transportation Omar Alghabra to cancel the \$36.16 million contract for drone technology from Elbit Systems, Israel's largest weapons company. Last December, the federal government announced it would purchase a "civilian" version of Elbit's lethal military drone, the same one that is used to kill Palestinians. VOW is very concerned that these contracts and partnerships with Israeli companies for intrusive security, defence and surveillance technologies make Canada complicit in the ongoing illegal Israeli occupation and violations of Palestinian human rights.

As well, Canada's Budget 2021 proposed funding of \$10 million over five years to expand opportunities for Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in research and development partnerships with Israeli SMEs as part of the Canadian International Innovation Program. The Government of Canada should not subsidize and engage in commercial relations with Israeli companies. As B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch have determined, Israel is an apartheid state. To end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, VOW supports the nonviolent program of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

(Continued page 6)

(From page 5) **VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE**

Furthermore, the federal government should also abide by its own domestic laws and not support Canadians serving in the IDF. Canada's *Foreign Enlistment Act* makes it illegal to induce or recruit for a foreign military. Canada Revenue Agency's guidelines state that "supporting the armed forces of another country is not" a charitable activity. The federal government should ensure that these legal requirements are followed.

VOW is also calling on the federal government to immediately increase aid and assistance to Gaza and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA is the organisation that runs schools and provides health services as well as other humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees. Last year, Minister of International Development Karina Gould announced a Canadian pledge of \$90 million over three years to UNRWA, but this is not enough. Canada must dramatically increase funding to help rebuild Palestinian communities in Gaza and the West Bank and to provide desperately needed services to Palestinian refugees.

VOW joins the international community in calling for a ceasefire and an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza and its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. At this time, we recall the important work of *Women Wage Peace*, the grassroots organization comprised of tens of thousands of Palestinian and Israeli women. *Women Wage Peace* is a broad, politically unaffiliated movement, which is acting to prevent war and to promote a non-violent, respectful, and mutually accepted peace deal. *Women Wage Peace* have organized many actions for peace and they are calling for the adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We acknowledge their crucial work for a viable peace agreement that raises women's voices and helps to end the conflict.

Sincerely,
Lyn Adamson & Hannah Hadikin
Co-Chairs
National Board

cc:
Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transportation
Erin O'Toole, leader of the Conservative Party
Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic Party
Annamie Paul, leader of the Green Party

Editors note: List of References not included here but are there in the original letter



Canadians support Palestinians' determination to pursue justice and full rights in their homeland

By: Khaled Mouammar: One Democratic State May 22, 2021

Unparalleled public outcry in major cities across the globe forced the U.S. government, Israel's main backer, to order Israel to end its 11 days bloody assault against the indigenous Palestinian people which started in Jerusalem, then spread to the West Bank and Israel proper, and then on to the Gaza Strip.

The thousands of deaths, injuries and arrests, and the ethnic cleansing and destruction inflicted is the latest in an on-going aggressive 73-year settler-colonization project by Israel against the indigenous Palestinian people in historic Palestine.

For too long the headlines and news bulletins have misled and confused the public about what is transpiring in historic Palestine, hence, settler-colonialism becomes a "conflict," on-going ethnic cleansing becomes "evictions," attacks by police and armed colonists on civilians becomes a "clash."

Such an ambiguous narrative erases the difference between occupiers and occupied, and ignores a campaign of violence and persecution waged by a military goliath, that possesses nuclear weapons and whose army is more powerful than Canada's military, against a fragmented and overwhelmingly defenseless Palestinian people who have no state, no army, no air force, no navy, and an almost non-existent civilian infrastructure.

It was thus left up to social media to slowly awaken the world to Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people, thus resulting in the huge outpouring of support for the indigenous Palestinian people.

As ever the truth will come out, and when it does it is hard to argue against it.

Israel's Basic Law affirms supremacy of Jews by stipulating that the State of Israel is the nation-state of only Jewish people; that only Jewish people have the right to self-determination; that the state shall be open only for Jewish immigration; and the state shall promote and strengthen only Jewish communities.

I, like 6 million Palestinian refugees, have been denied for 73 years the right to return to my hometown Nazareth in historic Palestine because I am a Christian, while any Jew, or convert to Judaism, may move there and obtain citizenship.

B'tselem's, a leading Israeli human rights organization, published a report in January 2021 calling Israel an "apartheid regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea."

Then along came the compelling report in April 2021 by Human Rights Watch (HRW), a prominent

(Continued page 7)

(From page 6) **Canadians support Palestinians'** mainstream human rights group based in New York, calling Israel a regime of "Jewish domination" guilty of committing the "crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution".

HRW also called on the Trudeau government to take action against "crimes against humanity" committed by the Israeli government, which it labelled an "apartheid" state.

It should be pointed out that successive Canadian governments and journalists routinely rely on and cite HRW in speeches, tweets, press releases, news stories and columns to assail the human rights violations of China, Russia and other international offenders.

Ironically, the HRW report has elicited no response from the Canadian government so far or caused a noticeable change of its stand towards apartheid Israel. The Trudeau government continues to refer to Israel as an ally and justifies its "right to defend itself" while Israel is "committing the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution" and violates both Canadian law and international law.

For 73 years Canada has funded, enabled and defended, both domestically and internationally, Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people.

From now on Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people have been exposed by HRW and cannot be washed away, and Canadians must therefore ensure that they are not repeated.

The indigenous people of Palestine, both the 7 million in historic Palestine and the 6 million refugees in the diaspora, are more united and determined than ever in their quest for nothing less than freedom, justice and full rights in their homeland.

Canada must come to the aid of the long-suffering Palestinian people by ending its complicity in aiding and abetting Israel, and must heed the call from HRW to impose arms and trade sanctions against apartheid Israel and to support the International Criminal Court's on-going prosecutions against it.

By doing so the Trudeau government will help in dismantling apartheid Israel as the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney did, by imposing sanctions on apartheid South Africa in 1986 which contributed to the dismantling of its apartheid regime by 1994.

It is better to know several basic rules of life than to study many unnecessary sciences. The major rules of life will stop you from evil and show you the good path in life; but the knowledge of many unnecessary sciences may lead you into the temptation of pride and stop you from understanding the basic rules of life.

Leo Tolstoy

Wisdom is knowing the purpose of life, and knowing how to achieve it.

Leo Tolstoy

A temporary absence of Israeli bombs is not justice

By: Independent Jewish Voices Canada

You might have heard the latest by now. Yesterday, after nearly two weeks of brutal Israeli attacks in Gaza, a ceasefire was finally declared. However, Israeli forces continued attacking Muslim worshippers at the Al Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem this morning, and Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah say they have been "placed under a siege" by Israeli forces following the ceasefire. As Israel continues its attacks (albeit in different forms), there remains much work to be done.

Let's be clear: a temporary absence of Israeli bombing is not justice. Justice won't be won until Palestine is free. Over the last two weeks, so many millions of us around the world raised our collective voices for Palestine. One thing that inspired me through all of this was seeing so many young Jews coming out to reject Israeli crimes being committed in our name. So as we take a moment to breathe a small collective sigh of relief, let's stay focused on what comes next.

Palestinians led the way. Jews showed up.

Over the last few weeks, Palestinians (and especially Palestinian youth) showed us what love and liberation look like in action, throughout Palestine, and right here in Canada. When the call went out to take the streets, we were there, from Victoria to Halifax. IJV had contingents in marches and demos in several cities, showing that we as Jews reject apartheid.

Indeed, as we wrote in a statement published earlier this week, the Canadian Jewish community DOES NOT stand united behind Israeli aggression. Far from it.

And when false accusations of antisemitic violence were made against Palestinian protestors in Toronto, we showed up to help correct the record.

We amplified Palestinian voices, raised our Jewish voices... and the media listened

As several people have pointed out, a crucial difference between this most recent assault on Gaza, and previous assaults, is that the well-funded Canadian pro-Israel lobby lost control of the narrative, and fast. And where their hasbara talking points failed, our message of justice and equality filled the void.

On Monday, IJV held a press conference outside the Israeli consulate in Montreal with our Palestinian allies, calling for Canada to impose immediate sanctions. Every single mainstream media outlet in Montreal was there. **Every. Single. One.** We had

(Continued page 8)

(From page 7) **A temporary absence**

We had exceptionally good coverage in the [Montreal Gazette](#), [CTV](#), and [TVA](#) (the most-watched Francophone TV station in Quebec).

And when a London, Ontario, business became the first in Canada to declare itself an Apartheid-Free Zone, we stood with them, and [CTV took note](#).

Yesterday, I went on the Canadaland podcast with Anishinaabe journalist/comedian Ryan McMahon to discuss Canadian media coverage of Israel-Palestine, and to talk about some things the media got wrong (and right!). It was a really fun conversation. [Have a listen here](#).

I was also featured in a [Canadian Press article](#) yesterday, in which I forcefully denounced alleged antisemitic threats in Montreal, while emphasizing that the vast majority of those protesting Israel's actions aren't doing so out of hatred of the Jewish people, but out of love for human rights and justice.

All of this media coverage is a sign that IJV is now a go-to source for analysis and commentary on the Israel-Palestine issue, and we are winning the hearts and minds of so many.

Advocacy in Action

Not only were our voices heard via Canadian media, but they were heard in parliament as well. Soon after Israel's attack on Gaza began, we launched an [email action campaign](#) to Justin Trudeau, demanding the Canadian government impose sanctions and ban arms sales to Israel. I'm so thrilled to say that over 6000 people responded and took action!

And our efforts paid off. Jagmeet Singh, leader of the NDP, called for a ban on arms sales to Israel, and pressed Trudeau on it in the House of Commons. An impressive number of MPs from both the NDP and Greens echoed that call, and even went as far as calling Israel an [apartheid state](#).

And yesterday, [a letter](#) was sent to Trudeau signed by 24 MPs (over half of them Liberals) and 2 Senators, asking that the government impose sanctions on Israel.

This is history being made, folks.

Aaron Lakoff

IJV Communications & Media Lead

aaron@ijvcanada.org

(From last column) **African liberation**

Later, a brutal Nakba took place when the U.K. aided the newly created state of Israel's settler-colonization. Meanwhile, the United States has armed and funded Israel for years. But lately, that support has come at a cost of \$3.8 billion per year, plus an additional \$8 billion in loan guarantees.

The Israeli settler-colonial project, which major human-rights groups have now characterized as "apartheid," is still supported by most European nations, with France recently even forbidding Palestinian protests. However, the French people ignored this blatant authoritarianism and marched in the thousands. Similarly sized crowds were seen throughout the world and in the belly of the U.S. empire. It appears the Western, decades-long misinformation campaign that has generated blind support for Israel—at least in the United States—is no longer working on a new generation of activists.

As Black internationalists, we will always be in solidarity with the Palestinian people as they struggle against U.S. imperialism and Zionist settler-colonialism. We understand that there will be no freedom for Palestine or for any of the nations and peoples of the world still oppressed by the Pan-European colonial-capitalist project without the development of a powerful movement at the center of that project here in the United States. That is why our folks have been in the streets over the past week at Palestine rallies, raising the connection between African liberation and Palestinian liberation. Some, like members [YahNé Ndgo](#) and [Bilal Mafundi Ali](#), were able to take the mic.

But we also say solidarity must be consistent. African/Black people in places like [Colombia](#) and [Haiti](#) also are struggling against U.S. imperialism. They, too, are demanding their sovereignty be respected. To learn about these recent struggles, read our [statement on Colombia](#) and watch Colombia webinars on this [page](#).

We would ask where the support is for our people. But we don't dwell too much on this question because we are independently organized, which allows us to raise up issues the U.S. left normally does not spend much, if any, time on. That is why we are organizing an [African Liberation Day webinar](#) that casts the lens on our people in the so-called "Americas," connecting those struggles to the broader struggle for the liberation of the global African nation and the global anti-colonial, anti-imperialist fight.

Just as we were in the streets last month demanding the release of our dear brother, [Mumia Abu Jamal](#), we will be in the streets for Colombia, Haiti, Palestine and all other colonized nations.

The people's struggle is escalating as neoliberal capitalism resorts to repression in the face of an unsustainable system. That is why we ask you to continue to circulate these newsletters among your networks and organize yourselves, so you are better prepared to be in solidarity with us.

Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness.

Leo Tolstoy

Linking Palestine solidarity with African liberation

By: The Black Alliance for Peace (A people(s) Centered Human Rights Project Against War, Repression and Imperialism)

"The managers of the colonial/capitalist world understand the terms of struggle, and so should we. It must be clear to us that for the survival of collective humanity and the planet we cannot allow uncontested power to remain in the hands of the global 1%. The painful truth for some is that if global humanity is to live, the Pan-European white supremacist colonial/capitalist project must die." - [Ajamu Baraka](#), Black Alliance for Peace National Organizer.

Like Indigenous people throughout the world, the Palestinian people demand a life of dignity, sovereignty and self-determination.

What prevents Palestinian national self-expression is the constructed state of Israel. The United Kingdom helped settle the first Zionists in Palestine in 1922 after the Balfour Declaration.

(Continued next column)

'A war declaration': Palestinians in Israel decry mass arrests

By: **Farah Najjar**: AL JAZEERA 24 May 2021

Israeli police announced they will arrest hundreds of Palestinian citizens of Israel over the coming days for their participation in recent sit-ins in support of Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and the besieged Gaza Strip.

The wave of mass arrests will take place as part of what police called "operation law and order". It is intended to penalise those who have taken part in demonstrations against settler violence, the Israeli forces' crackdown on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, and the military's 11-day bombardment campaign of Gaza, which killed 248 people.

In a statement on Sunday night, Israeli police said some 1,550 people have already been arrested since May 9 and the campaign is a "continuation" that aims to "prosecute" demonstrators who have over the past two weeks taken to the streets in towns and cities across Israel.

Thousands of security forces from "all units" will be deployed to carry out raids, it said, in towns and cities predominantly inhabited by Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up about 20 percent of the country's population.

The statement did not say the campaign would target Jewish settlers who have attacked Palestinians and their homes, as documented in videos and images widely shared on social media.

Police – including border guards and reserve brigades – will search homes and conduct "investigations" until charges are submitted and prison sentences are imposed, it added.

Hassan Jabareen, the general director of Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, declared the campaign a "war" against Palestinian demonstrators, political activists and minors.

The massive arrest operation is a "militarised war against Palestinian citizens of Israel," Jabareen said in a statement sent to Al Jazeera on Monday, urging a "rapid response" from all Palestinian political movements, parties, and from the High Follow-up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel.

The purpose of the arrests is to "intimidate and to exact revenge on Palestinian citizens of Israel – 'to settle the score' with Palestinians, in the Israeli police's own words – for their political positions and activities", he said.

Disrupting protests

Rallies in cities including Haifa, Yafa, Lydd and Nazareth started earlier this month in solidarity with Palestinian families facing the imminent forced expulsion from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah.

During the sit-ins, several Palestinians were assaulted by Jewish settlers who at times, backed by Israeli police, marched in the streets chanting anti-Palestinian slogans, including "death to Arabs".

Others were killed as the demonstrations quickly grew following Israeli forces' attack on worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the subsequent Israeli military assault on Gaza.

On May 10, a Palestinian resident was shot dead by a Jewish settler who was part of a far-right mob. And on May 19, Mohammed Kiwan, 17, succumbed to his wounds after being shot in the head by Israeli police in the town of Umm al-Fahem.

Dozens of others have been arrested with some still awaiting formal charges.

To date, 140 indictments have been brought against 230 people, the majority of whom are Palestinians, including minors, local media reported. They have been charged with assaulting police officers, endangering the lives of citizens in the streets, demonstrating, throwing stones and arson.

(Continued next column)

(From last column) 'A war declaration' 'Didn't want us to go home'

In Yafa, Bashar Ali, a 25-year-old university student, was among the 1,550 arrested during the past two weeks.

He was with a group of protesters who suffered beatings and tear gas inhalation after protesting against Israel's bombardment and continuing siege of Gaza on May 11.

"It was a peaceful sit-in of some 250 people," Ali said. "Some of us were working on raising funds for those wounded in Jerusalem and Gaza."

After gathering for nearly two hours at one of Yafa's community parks, protesters began making their way home at about 6:30pm, but the police blocked the main streets.

"They didn't want us to go home. Some police officers began assaulting us, I saw them beat an elderly man and a young lady," Ali recalled.

"We confronted them and that's when a group of armed policemen gathered and arrested me along with several others," he added.

Ali was released the following day, but is now under house arrest for one month. He is currently in Kokab, a village in al-Jalil (Galilee), where, according to him, six people were arrested from their homes overnight.

Janan Abdu is a Haifa-based lawyer with the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel who has volunteered to defend imprisoned Palestinians.

"These are not just police forces but also include special units – border police, secret services and undercover forces," she said.

Abdu said she noticed similarities in the "kind of violations and ill-treatment" these same units used against Palestinians in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

"They treat their citizens as an enemy. There has always been two systems: one for Arabs and one for the Jews," said Abdu.

"Police have attacked and arrested people recording and documenting the assaults. In some cases, police also collected false evidence from minors during interrogation sessions during detention."

'Major miscalculation'

Meanwhile, Ahmad Tibi, a member of the Israeli parliament with the Joint List, the Palestinian-majority electoral alliance, said Israel did not expect the Palestinian citizens of Israel to rally in support of others in Jerusalem and Gaza.

The "major miscalculation" by Israeli police came even though this is not the first time Palestinian citizens of Israel have rallied against Israeli policies in Jerusalem and other parts of the occupied territories.

In the latest round of sit-ins, police "lost control" inside Israel, Tibi said, describing the latest campaign as a "show" and a bid by Israeli police to assert control at the expense of the Palestinian people.

It is a "miserable attempt to intimidate our youth to stop them from exercising their right to express their opinion", he said.

Majd Kayyal, a Haifa-based activist, agreed.

"The Israeli police lost their ability to frighten and terrorize the Palestinians. This is why they launched this campaign," he told Al Jazeera.

(Continued page 10)

(From page 9) 'A war declaration'

More than 500 Palestinian homes are expected to be raided in the next 48 hours, Kayyal said, citing Israeli police and media reports.

"They want to restore this feeling of terror in us, to teach us a lesson. But they also want to disrupt Palestinian unity – which is what this uprising is all about."

Meanwhile, calls for action on social media by Palestinians in Israel – who amount to 1.8 million people – have spread with many also describing the announcement as a "declaration of war".

Palestinian citizens of Israel have long been discriminated against in many aspects of life, including the right to due process.

But according to Kayyal, protests are not enough to stop the cycle of violence.

"We need to start a new chapter as Palestinians inside Israel. We need to rip apart and dismantle Israel's fragmentation policy [of Palestinians under its control]," he said.

"Our fight as Palestinian citizens of Israel is a part of the collective fight of the Palestinian people against Israel's settler-colonial project."

Saying no to fighter jets, yes to 'life-giving projects'

By: **John Longhurst**; The Winnipeg Free Press April 2021

CONCERN about proposed military spending by the Canadian government prompted a La Salle couple to spend the weekend fasting and praying.

Ernie and Charlotte Wiens went without food Saturday and Sunday to protest a plan by the federal government to buy 88 new fighter jets at a cost of \$19 billion.

Over their service lifetime, the jets are predicted to cost the country about \$77 billion.

"There are too many other important causes needing our resources today," said Ernie, 74, about why he and Charlotte, 71, decided to fast as part of the No Fighter Jets campaign, which is supported by 16 Canadian peace and faith groups, including the Winnipeg Peace Alliance.

The retired farmers, who are members of the La Salle Community Fellowship, a Mennonite Brethren congregation, think the money should rather be used for "life-giving things."

"Why spend money on weapons for killing when it could be used to sustain life?" asked Ernie, noting the funds could be used to provide Indigenous people with clean drinking water, to support the health-care system, or to ensure quality care for seniors in personal care homes.

Internationally, it could also be used to alleviate poverty and hunger and provide poor nations with COVID-19 vaccines, they said.

"There's no end of good things to spend money on," said Charlotte, 74.

This is especially true during a pandemic, with so many needs especially among vulnerable and marginalized populations.

"It's ludicrous to be thinking of spending money on jets at a time like this," said Ernie.

The Wiens chose last weekend to fast to be in solidarity with Dr. Brendan Martin of Langley, B.C., who started a two-week fast April 10 to protest the planned purchase of the jets.

(Continued next column)

(From last column) Saying no to fighter jets

"The support of the Wiens is wonderful. It means a lot to me," said Martin, who worked as a doctor in Killarney for 11 years.

Martin, who is inspired to take action by his Roman Catholic faith, said he is fasting because "we see violence everywhere, and we all have a responsibility to try and stop it."

For the Wiens, the fast is part of their long-standing commitment to opposing militarism by diverting a portion of their taxes to Conscience Canada for its Peace Tax Fund.

Since starting to divert money about 12 years ago, they estimate they've sent about \$6,000 to the fund in an effort to get the federal government to make it legal for people to direct taxes for peaceful purposes.

To date, the Canadian Revenue Agency has taken back about 80 per cent of that amount from Ernie's Canada pension.

"This fast is part of that same journey," he said of their desire to "stop seeing their taxes spent on war."

In this, the couple are motivated by the example of Jesus, who "told his followers to love their enemies," and "take action against violence and injustice," Ernie said, adding they want to do it in "a respectful and non-violent manner."

They are also inspired to take action by their 10 grandchildren, especially when they think about children in places such as Yemen who are dying because of a war that is being waged partly with weapons sold by Canada to Saudi Arabia.

"The bottom line for me is how can we accept the suffering of children in Yemen because of our country's involvement?" said Charlotte. "I can only imagine how I would feel if it was one of our grandchildren who was injured or starving."

"So few know about the government's intention to buy the jets," said Ernie.

"Let's stop spending money on war and give it to life-giving projects."

faith@freepress.mb.ca

Divert your gaze from the world of lies. Do not trust your feelings. Only in yourself, only in your impersonal self, can you find the eternal.
Dhammapada, a book of Buddhist Wisdom

Only speak when your words are better than your silence. *Arabic Proverb*

Many stupid things are uttered by people whose only motivation is to say something original.
Voltaire