

# BOUNDARY PEACE INITIATIVE

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## 2021 Theme: Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world

*From: the UN International Day of Peace*

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

In 2021, as we heal from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are inspired to think creatively and collectively about how to help everyone recover better, how to build resilience, and how to transform our world into one that is more equal, more just, equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and healthier.

The pandemic is known for hitting the underprivileged and marginalized groups the hardest. By April 2021, over 687 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered globally, but over 100 countries have not received a single dose. People caught in conflict are especially vulnerable in terms of lack of access to healthcare.

In line with the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire last March, in February 2021 the Security Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for Member States to support a "sustained humanitarian pause" to local conflicts. The global ceasefire must continue to be honoured, to ensure people caught in conflict have access to lifesaving vaccinations and treatments.

The pandemic has been accompanied by a surge in stigma, discrimination, and hatred, which only cost more lives instead of saving them: the virus attacks all without caring about where we are from or what we believe in. Confronting this common enemy of humankind, we must be reminded that we are not each other's enemy. To be able to recover from the devastation of the pandemic, we must make peace with one another. And we must make peace with nature. Despite the travel restrictions and economic shutdowns, climate change is not on pause. What we need is a green and sustainable global economy that produces jobs, reduces emissions, and builds resilience to climate impacts.

The 2021 theme for the International Day of Peace is "Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world". We invite you to join the efforts of the United Nations family as we focus on recovering better for a more equitable and peaceful world. Celebrate peace by standing up against acts of hate online and offline, and by spreading compassion, kindness, and hope in the face of the pandemic, and as we recover.

### Background

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. Two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire.

## Taliban takeover highlights failure of war to bring democracy, say pacifists

*From: Peace Pledge Union August 16, 2021*

British pacifists have condemned the Taliban as well as the US and UK governments for the situation unfolding in Afghanistan.

The Peace Pledge Union (PPU) said that the Taliban's return to power after 20 years of NATO military action had made clear that democracy cannot be brought about with bombs and guns.

The PPU made clear that their first thoughts today are with the people of Afghanistan facing the horrors of renewed Taliban rule. They expressed their concerns for the Afghan Peace Volunteers, a pacifist community in Kabul who oppose both the Taliban and NATO forces.

The PPU was among the many groups to campaign against the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

Today they pointed out that the Taliban have been using the US-led military occupation of the country to justify their own violence. In the same way, the US government of George W. Bush used the horrific killings of '9/11' to justify killing an even greater number of civilians in Afghanistan.

The PPU insists that, "Militarism anywhere encourages militarism everywhere".

"The lies used to justify war are ringing hollow today," said the PPU's campaigns manager Symon Hill. "Thousands of lives have been wasted in war: the 457 British forces personnel killed, the other NATO troops who died with them, the much greater number of Afghans killed, shamefully uncounted by the western authorities."

Commenting on the billions of pounds spent on war in Afghanistan since 2001, the PPU suggested that the money could have been better spent building up health care, education, infrastructure and civil society in Afghanistan. This would have considerably weakened the Taliban's recruiting appeal, based on calling for resistance to US occupation.

The PPU slammed the hypocrisy of successive UK governments and military leaders for using talk of democracy to justify wars and destruction that may have had more to do with strategic and commercial interests, and loyalty to the US establishment.

The PPU's Symon Hill added, "While British ministers rightly condemn the Taliban, they continue to sell arms to equally vicious regime of Saudi Arabia. British armed forces are providing training to the Saudi forces killing civilians in Yemen. Real support for democracy involves long-term international solidarity against war and injustice, not the perpetuation of cycles of violence."

The Peace Pledge Union is the British section of War Resisters' International, which unites pacifists and anti-militarists around the world.



## Afghanistan

By: *The United National Anti-War Coalition (Aug. 16, 2021)*

Events are happening very fast in the world today but perhaps none faster than the rapid advance of the Taliban and the fall of the US puppet regime in Afghanistan. It is reported that [Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country with four cars and a helicopter full of cash.](#)

Perhaps we were not prepared for the rapid fall of the US supported Afghan government and forces because we have not been told the truth throughout the 20-year occupation and war. The US supposedly went into Afghanistan to capture Osama Bin Laden who they held responsible for the attacks on 9/11. [The Taliban government said they would turn him over to an international court if shown proof of his involvement,](#) but rather than do that, the US attacked and occupied the country and turned the government over to a group of war lords from the Northern Alliance. That was supposed to bring democracy to Afghanistan. Twenty years later the Taliban has returned stronger than ever.

It has to be clear that the Taliban have a lot of support in Afghanistan because they took the entire country at lightning speed. They have no Air Force, no advanced weaponry or intelligence. The Taliban are not from outside the country, they are a home grown movement. So why do they have such support? The answer is that they have been the main force in the country that has been resisting the occupation of the US and its Western allies, and the Afghan people, like all people, do not like to be occupied. The last 20 years have been hell for the Afghan people. Around [240,000 have been killed,](#) there have been massive numbers of drone strikes and bombings, Black sites for torture such as Bagram Air Base were created. [Opium production skyrocketed](#) under the US occupation and [72% for the population lived at or below the poverty level.](#) In a survey reported by the Associated Press in January 2020, [only 33% of the people surveyed wanted the US to stay in their country.](#) In another poll, 80% of Afghans said they feel fear when encountering the foreign occupation forces.

There has been a lot of talk about the puppet government supporting women's rights, but this is a sham. According to Afghan activist Malalai Joya, speaking on Democracy Now in July, "the catastrophic situation of the women of Afghanistan was a very good excuse for U.S. and NATO to occupy our country. Unfortunately, they pushed us from the frying pan into the fire as they replaced the barbaric regime of the Taliban with the misogynist warlords... That's why today millions of Afghans are suffering from insecurity, corruption, joblessness, poverty. And still, most of Afghan women are the victims." Several years ago, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) organized a US tour for Malalai Joya.

The US was never in Afghanistan to fight terrorism or to bring a better life for the Afghan people; they were there to install a pro-US government that would support their strategic political and military goals in the region including their aggression against China and Iran.

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## (From last column) Afghanistan

Additionally, they wanted to get their hands on the vast mineral resources in Afghanistan. If the US was interested in helping people in other countries, they would not be supporting despotic regimes such as those in Saudi Arabia, Haiti, Columbia, Israel and many others.

Now that the US has been defeated in Afghanistan, we can be sure that they will impose additional sanctions to make the people of that country suffer more and push for a regime change through which they can start the entire process over again. The continued US bombing in areas that fell to the Taliban was responsible for the killing of many civilians causing people to flee and the destruction of schools and health centers. We must demand: No more bombing, remove all troops, mercenaries, and special forces from the country and the surrounding area, no sanctions, and pay reparations for the destruction caused by their war and occupation. The people of Afghanistan must find their own way free from US intervention.

## Canadian Scholars and Former Diplomats Urge Federal Leaders to Prioritize Foreign Policy

By: *The Institute for Peace and Diplomacy*

*40 Canadian scholars, experts, and former diplomats have signed an [open letter](#) initiated by the Institute for Peace and Diplomacy (IPD) urging all federal party leaders to recognize the importance of foreign policy issues and international affairs in the current election campaign.*

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

Hon. Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party

Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Annamie Paul, Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Dear party leaders,

We are a group of scholars, researchers and experts on Canadian foreign policy. We are joining forces to urge all federal parties to recognize the importance of foreign policy issues and international affairs in this summer election campaign. Beyond pocketbook issues, a credible conversation on Canada's interests and role in the world is a necessary part of what will inform voters.

This election coincides with a critical moment for Canada's role on the global stage. A series of challenges from near and afar have had direct impacts on the jobs, safety, and livelihoods of Canadians. In a rapidly changing global context, Canada's security and prosperity will be contingent on how its political parties define and enact its foreign policy.

Turbulence in the Canada-US relationship, which began under the Trump administration but has not entirely abated under Joe Biden, signals the dawn of an era of unpredictability which should overturn traditional Canadian assumptions about foreign policy and the international order. Similarly, the rise of China will have implications for Canada's interests in ways that will be difficult to anticipate.

(Continued page 3)

### 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](http://www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org)  
For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434  
or email [L4peace@telus.net](mailto:L4peace@telus.net).**

### Brand New World

**By: Ehab Lotaeif**

*In November 2001, I wrote this poem. I post it now, as Kabul fell, again (no comment needed).*

Kabul fell!  
Well ...  
congratulations  
on swapping Abdul for Abdel  
Opium will be flowing still  
and all the amputees,  
survivors of a war that can never be won,  
will continue to live in hell

But  
congratulations  
anyway:  
Kabul fell

*Kabul fell:  
Bright red roses  
will spring around every well  
The camel will give way to the SUV  
The mud-hut to the motel  
It's the dawn of a brand new world,  
now that Kabul fell*

***Today's prescription will  
cause tomorrow's ills  
Heroes become villains,  
villains become heroes,  
at the White-House-man's will***

Kabul fell ...



### (From page 2) Canadian Scholars

A multipolar world framed by an accelerating contest between great powers will impose constraints on Canada's ability to define and secure its interests as a sovereign country. With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more clear that Canadian life is inextricably linked to global affairs.

It is imperative that the next government articulate Canada's voice on foreign policy issues and how it will navigate its international relationships in the years ahead. Canada's failed bid for a UN Security Council seat, its second in a decade, indicates that its global presence may already be waning. With the international order in flux, Canada needs a strategy to meet the challenges of the 21st century. If Canada continues to marginalize the vital role of foreign policy discussions at home, it risks diminishing its ability to secure its way of life and prepare for an increasingly uncertain world.

Amid this backdrop, we call on representatives from Canada's federal parties to participate in foreign policy debates, to recognize the importance of foreign policy in securing Canada's welfare, to raise the relevance of foreign policy issues where necessary, and to express strategically minded visions for Canada's role in the world during this election campaign.

#### List of Signatories:

**Jeremy Kinsman: Peggy Mason: Ben Rowswell: Guy Saint-Jacques: Henri-Paul Normandin:  
Paul Meyer: Kerckhove Ferry: Haig E. Sarafian: Thomas Axworthy: Jack Cunningham: H el ene Laverdi ere:  
Margaret Cornish: Colin Robertson: Stephen Saideman:  
David Dewitt: Kim Richard Nossal: Chris Kilford: John Packer: Michael Byers :** Professor, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia and Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law.  
**Andrew Cohen :** Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University  
**Marie-Jo elle Zahar:** Director, Research Network on Peace Operations, University of Montreal.  
**David Carment :** Professor of International Affairs, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University.

One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task. *'Abdu'l-Bah *

To be strong, you have to be like water; if there are no obstacles, it flows; if there is an obstacle it stops; if a dam is broken, then it flows further; if a vessel is square, then it has a square form; if a vessel is round, then it has a round form. Because it is so soft and flexible, it is the most necessary and the strongest thing. *Lao Tzu*

## WHAT'S UP?



Take a few minutes to contemplate how we, the people of the world, can guide ourselves to the goal set for International Day of Peace. And then ask yourself what and how you are willing to do to get there. The BPI hopes we can get back to hosting events without risk of infecting one another soon. In the meantime let's take steps daily to live peace in our individual lives so that we are then ready to share that with our community and our planet.

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 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](mailto:L4peace@telus.net).

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

## [ OPEN LETTER ] FOR THE CRIMINALISATION OF ECOCIDE

### We are living in a unique moment in the history of humanity

Mass damage and destruction of ecosystems – ecocide – committed for decades with impunity, has led to the current climate crisis, the collapse of biodiversity and the increase in serious environmental harms.

This is putting our future and that of millions of other living beings at risk because it is affecting the very life-support systems of the Earth. The future of the planet will depend on the decisions we make and the actions we take today.

Existing treaties, agreements and civil lawsuits have not been able to stop this destruction.

### Clearly, we must change the rules

The time has come to introduce an international crime of ECOCIDE, to ensure the lasting protection of all life on Earth.

### Therefore, all signatory organizations and associations below ASK THEIR GOVERNMENT to:

Publicly declare support for an international crime of Ecocide, joining those countries ready to amend the Rome Statute to include it as the fifth Crime Against Peace, alongside Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes and the Crime of Aggression, providing a simple, effective deterrent for those in positions of responsibility, enforceable within existing criminal justice systems.

We are Stop Ecocide Canada, the Canadian branch of Stop Ecocide International, a campaign which is aiming to make Ecocide <https://www.stopecocide.earth/legal-definition> (mass destruction of the environment) an international crime.

Our international campaign is gaining huge momentum with the unveiling of the Legal Definition <https://www.stopecocide.earth/legal-definition> of Ecocide, and there has been amazing media coverage <https://www.stopecocide.earth/read>.

Our national campaign, Stop Ecocide Canada <https://www.stopecocide.earth/canada> was founded a year ago, and since then we have made incredible strides forward. We have spoken with multiple MPs and gained the support from members in every federal party. We have hosted webinars in partnership with Indigenous leaders, on how an International law of ecocide could support Indigenous rights, and we work closely with other organizations across the country, including RAVEN Trust, Climate Strike Canada, and MockCop 26 youth and more.

Ahead of the federal election, we are launching an open letter, calling on the Canadian government to publicly declare its support for an international crime of Ecocide. This has the power to ensure the lasting protection of all life on Earth, providing a simple, effective deterrent for those in positions of responsibility, enforceable within existing criminal justice systems. We would love to count on your support! You can add your digital signature for your organization to our open letter here:

<https://www.stopecocide.earth/canada-open-letter>

In January this year, the Canadian government responded to our parliamentary petition <https://www.stopecocide.earth/press-releases-summary/canadian-government-to-follow-closely-global-conversation-on-ecocide>, stating that they are committed to be a world leader for climate, both in terms of environmental action and peace promotion, and will continue to closely follow the discussions on ecocide at the international level. □ We want to make sure that we keep the pressure on with this open letter!

For more information about Stop Ecocide International, consult our two page summary [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aZFhCGSGFHT\\_U402SadbR5t6GFhggwkp0B5qIWUiiw/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aZFhCGSGFHT_U402SadbR5t6GFhggwkp0B5qIWUiiw/edit).

Thank you for considering our invitation, and please do let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely

Dona Grace-Campbell, Campaign Manager, Kaslo

Jamie Hunter, Youth Co-Founder

Marylee Banyard, Nelson

***Ed. Note: The Boundary Peace Initiative, after consultation with our membership, has signed this appeal, prior to the Federal Election being called and to affiliate with this group on our mutual concern for a more sustainable world.***