



## **Feminist Foreign Policy Review**

Submitted to Global Affairs Canada

By: The Institute for International Women's Rights - Manitoba

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### **Written Contribution: *Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba***

We, at the Institute for International Women's Rights - Manitoba (IIWR-MB), would like to extend our thanks to the Government of Canada for its continued effort in moving towards a feminist foreign policy. We are encouraged by the steps that have been taken to advance this work over the past few years, such as the appointment of Ms. Jacqueline O'Neil, the Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security. It is steps like this that open the door to Canadians to engage meaningfully with the government on subjects like the women, peace and security agenda. Canada's ongoing leadership in the area of gender equality and the application of a feminist lens to policy and programming is laudable. At a grassroots level, we are working for all genders and sexes to be present at decision-making tables in an intersectional way. We were excited by Canada's leadership in hosting the "Leaving No One Behind: The Equal Rights Coalition Global Conference on LGBTQI Human Rights and Inclusive Development" in 2018.

As we live in a digital era, with the understanding that violence can occur in any space, we are appreciative of Canada's role in leading the adoption of the Human Rights Council Resolution on Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls in Digital Contexts, which included the co-sponsor of 73 countries. It is on occasions such as those aforementioned that we note the beginning of Canada's commitment to promote and protect the rights and freedoms of women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. That work, however, is still only in its beginning stages. While we remain optimistic about the developments that Canada has achieved in the global context, there is still much work to be done to ensure that true gender equality can be achieved globally.

First, true feminist foreign policy begins at home, in Canada. As we speak, Indigenous women and girls continue to be [denied their basic rights](#) because of government inaction and failure of follow-through on the development Action Plan to implement the

[231 recommendations](#) contained in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry report. In order for Canada to become a leader in foreign policy, we must first address internal inequalities that continue to persist here at home, culminating in a genocide against Indigenous women, girls, femmes and two-spirit people. Only then can we properly address the violations against Indigenous women and girls around the world. Canada must show the world that reaffirmation of the elimination of violence against women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks is a Canadian priority. We call on the government of Canada to set an example for the rest of the world by acting immediately on this issue by following the leadership of Indigenous womxn and communities most directly impacted by this inaction.

Second, young females and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks are affected by [barriers and discrimination](#) that go beyond their sex. Intersectional identities, including but not limited to sexuality, race, gender identity and expression, disability, class and age all factor into the access and privileges that some are afforded. In order to pursue true gender equality and a feminist foreign policy, the government must adequately recognize and work to meet all peoples' diverse needs within their policies and programs. Within this understanding of working within an intersectional feminist framework, we call on the government to take concrete steps to reinforce the implementation of [Security Council Resolution 1325](#) (SCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and [Security Council Resolution 2250](#) (SCR 2250) on Youth Peace and Security (YPS) and the suite of resolutions connected to SCR 1325 and SCR 2250. The work done to address SCR 1325 and SCR 2250 must be more reflective of the unique needs and intersections that exist for young females and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks that exist between these two frameworks. In particular, specific attention must be given to the [participation](#) of young women and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance. As well as in relief and recovery, including economic and political recovery and transitional justice efforts. We know that the more inclusive the peacemaking table, the more [sustainable](#) the peace will be. .

Third, a feminist foreign policy requires disaggregated data, a gap that has [slowly begun closing](#) but continues to exist in many aspects of governmental work. Disaggregated data in regards to feminist foreign aid is essential to account for who is being supported and ensuring that aid is available to those who often are too left behind. Compilation of disaggregated data should not further burden recipients of aid, especially in grassroots contexts. Furthermore, while there has been movement to address gaps in investments, there must be an active investment in grassroots, women, youth and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and movements. This requires dedicated, accessible and sustainable funding that comprehends the undue burden that can occur to these organizations and movements with extraneous and rigid reporting requirements.

Fourth, Canada's National Defense Policy must be revised to ensure it is reflective of an intersectional feminist policy. Feminist policy requires addressing the intersection of gender in working to end war, violent conflict, occupation and oppression. A first step towards feminist policy in our military actions and policy would be sign and ratify the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#). The other pressing action is to immediately end the sale of militarized equipment to states and bodies who will turn that weaponry against civilians and innocent people as has been seen in [Yemen](#). Sales of this equipment [propagates violence](#), specifically gender-based violence, and [disproportionately impacts](#) women and children in conflict affected regions. A feminist foreign policy cannot choose when it is most expedient to operate within a feminist framework and when to not. It must always operate within a feminist framework.

Fifth, women, children, 2SLGBTQIA+ and vulnerable persons must be recentered in migration and refugee policy, specifically in regard to migration due to conflict or disaster. A feminist foreign policy cannot be separated from migration and refugee policy within Canada, due to their linked nature. While there has been progress on issues of family reunification and [Resolution 117\(9\)\(d\)](#), further amendments to these regulations are necessary to provide increased opportunities for families, including [extended families](#), to reunite. This includes an expansion of the concept of family in immigration and refugee policy beyond the immediate (and limited) family in order to match the understanding that conflict can result in circumstances where extended support is the only support available. This is particularly important for women and children who may be disadvantaged in resettlement without familial support due to gender norms and trauma.

For 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, Canada's refugee and immigration system has very specific barriers as it does [not allow common-law partners](#) to be listed as non-accompanying family members. In turn, this denies 2SLGBTQ+ families the ability to be recognized in countries where same-sex marriage is illegal or inaccessible. Additionally, many governments [do not allow same-sex partners](#) to adopt their partners biological children or joint adoption. Due to this narrow, heterosexual understanding of family, these policies ultimately work to keep families apart.

While this is by no means an exhaustive list, we hope the conversation will be ongoing to provide feedback with the comprehension that true feminist policy requires community collaboration to build gender equality. A feminist foreign policy must address intersectionality and examine the ways that cultural norms, discrimination, political processes and institutionalized, systemic inequality intersect. Moving forward, the government must continue to engage in robust dialogue and seek active collaboration from local, grassroots organizations, as well as from individuals who have lived experience of inequality and understand its local context. Specifically in regard to

actions that impact the lived realities of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in nations around the world. It is in this way that, together, we can achieve true gender equality.

We extend our thanks to Global Affairs Canada for this invitation to contribute to the dialogue on a Feminist Foreign Policy. We anticipate that our recommendations and perspectives will be given proper consideration.

On behalf of IIWR-MB,

Leah Wilson - Co-Chair of Advocacy

Micaela Crighton - Co-Chair of Advocacy

Sarah Bonner-Proulx - Advocacy Committee Member