



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 016

PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT

Thursday, February 4, 2021



Chair: Mr. Sven Spengemann

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.)): Colleagues, welcome to meeting number 16 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on October 22, 2020, we are resuming our study on the vulnerabilities created and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[English]

To ensure an orderly meeting, as usual, I encourage all participants to mute their microphones when they're not speaking and direct comments through the chair. When you have 30 seconds remaining in your questioning or testimony time, I will signal you with this yellow piece of paper.

Interpretation services are available through the globe icon at the bottom of your screens.

[Translation]

I'd like to welcome our witnesses from the first group. We have with us Mr. Guillaume Landry, Director General, International Bureau for Children's Rights.

[English]

We also have Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder and executive director of War Child Canada, and Anu George Canjanathoppil, executive director of International Justice Mission Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Landry, you have the floor for five minutes to make your presentation.

Mr. Guillaume Landry (Director General, International Bureau for Children's Rights): Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

I'm going to proceed quickly because there's a lot to say. I will try to add to what colleagues have already said in the previous session by focusing on the changing relationship between children and justice as a result of the pandemic, in the context of armed conflict, emergency or natural disaster.

What we have seen since the beginning of the pandemic is that children's relationship with justice is changing. New rules and regulations are being put in place: martial law, curfews and restrictions

that ultimately affect children's lives. Schools close, and children are left to fend for themselves because their parents have to work more, travel to distant locations, or fight on the front lines.

There are obviously all sorts of other aspects to consider, such as the recruitment of more defence and security forces. I'm thinking of the Sahel, which, like most countries, has seen a massive deployment of police, constables and military in the streets to monitor the movement of people. As a result, there are far more interactions between children and these security personnel than there used to be simply because the children are not necessarily in school anymore and the interactions are becoming a part of the new norm.

The pressures on families also cause socio-economic conditions to deteriorate and, for many, the fine line between crime and normalcy is becoming blurred. As a result, many children find themselves in situations where they come into conflict with the law for a variety of reasons.

We must also take into account the pervasive presence of technology, both at home and in the poorest countries, where there are armed conflicts. Technology—cell phones are one example—is very present, and children have to deal with it and the opportunities it presents, but often without much supervision. We are seeing a significant increase in child trafficking and sexual exploitation through technology in a context that opens the door to abuse, given the increasing number of interactions between children and technology, as well as a decrease in parental, school or other supervision of access to these tools.

There has also been a decline in the number of front-line workers, that is to say social workers, justice personnel, security forces, labour and civil society inspectors, and so on. There is also a decrease in their capacity to deploy and offer services, especially in preventive but also curative fashion. This means that, for most children, the safety net is shrinking. They are more left to their own devices, and this means—as we have seen here, as in most countries—that the number of sexual assaults, and sexual exploitation, is increasing as a result of the pandemic.

This phenomenon is truly global in scope and affects all countries affected by these realities and where the family bubble has closed. The child's connections to the outside world allowed him or her to have valves, benchmarks or services, but this has reduced access to these services and increased the pressure on parents. This situation may ultimately exacerbate returns to spousal and child abuse, including sexual abuse.

These children are caught in a kind of matrix. I would like to highlight the lack of freedom. It is both a constraint and a timely opportunity—it is worth mentioning. Deprivation of liberty, as we learned last year, is seen in the fact that 7 million children in the world find themselves in preventive detention, in migration camps, in orphanages, without being able to go out. This makes them child detainees or children in trouble with the police, without convictions, without charges. More and more children are in these situations.

The pandemic has meant that, often to protect staff, many countries have unanimously explored certain measures—I'm thinking of Sudan or Palestine, for example. We saw that 85% of children who were detained were released for fear of contamination.

The alternative to incarceration, diversion, has made great strides in just a few months, and there are many possibilities. However, at the same time, curfews and regulations are imposed and children come into conflict with the law. This is the case for many adults as well. The systems are not adequate. Thus, there is a shift toward curtailment of freedom, which is of great concern.

That concludes my presentation.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Landry.

[*English*]

Next we have Dr. Samantha Nutt for five minutes of opening remarks

Go ahead, please. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Dr. Samantha Nutt (Founder and Executive Director, War Child Canada): Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

This is undoubtedly an uncertain and difficult time for children and young people around the world, but especially for those living in poverty and war zones.

• (1540)

[*English*]

As a medical doctor and public health specialist, I've spent a quarter-century now engaged in developing and implementing humanitarian programs in support of the world's most vulnerable children, especially in my capacity as president of War Child Canada.

My testimony today is derived from direct information from our programs that span Africa, Asia and the Middle East and reach an average of 600,000 children and their families each year and which are created and managed by our teams of more than 450 staff worldwide, 99% of whom come from the communities they serve.

Certainly what I can tell you, based on our experience over the past year, is that communities within fragile states are currently facing an unprecedented challenge when it comes to protecting the world's most vulnerable children, which Mr. Landry mentioned as well. This is a reality that deepens the longer this pandemic plays out. In fact, the COVID pandemic for children living with armed conflict unfortunately threatens to wipe out much of the progress

that we have seen in recent decades. These threats can be abated but only if there is sufficient public goodwill as well as concerted political action.

[*Translation*]

Today I want to focus on four priority concerns, though it should be noted that these are interconnected.

[*English*]

We see first-hand that children and youth here at home are feeling the harmful effects of lockdown measures when it comes to their mental health, physical security and academic performance.

[*Translation*]

But children living with war were already facing colossal disruptions to their education, sometimes for years, due to violence and displacement.

[*English*]

Lockdown measures in response to COVID, alongside rising social and political instability in several regions in which War Child is currently operating, have only compounded this hardship. Girls in particular are especially vulnerable as families face income declines and can no longer afford the cost of tuition, for example, or because they are too frequently pulled from their studies to tend to child care and domestic work. The longer children in such contexts are out of school, the bigger the gap in their education, and the bigger the gap in their education, the less likely it is that they will ever return. This also puts girls especially at increased risk of early and forced marriage.

[*Translation*]

Children and youth who are not in school are also at much greater risk of being abducted or recruited by armed groups, being trafficked, and of experiencing sexual and gender-based violence.

[*English*]

Compounding these disruptions right now is a stark lack of infrastructure to support remote or distance-based learning in low-income countries more generally, but in war zones quite specifically. UNICEF estimates that a third of schoolchildren worldwide cannot be reached by broadcast or Internet-based remote learning. Global Affairs Canada has been supporting our organization's efforts in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to reach half a million out-of-school children through the development of radio-based education programming. These efforts are ongoing. They are quite successful. However, there is an overwhelming urgency to expand such opportunities to neighbouring regions to ensure that children who are living with war or as refugees are not further burdened by generational poverty as a lasting consequence of such disruptions to their education.

To address this, governments must start planning now, today, to work with local and international organizations engaged in education to expand distance-based learning and build out catch-up—often called accelerated—learning opportunities, which should begin as conditions allow. This is particularly critical for secondary school youth who are living with war, where the gaps are historically the most pronounced and where the runway for getting them back onto an educational pathway is usually the shortest.

[*Translation*]

The second is food security. In brief, food is getting harder to access and less affordable for communities living with war.

[*English*]

The pandemic has driven up shipping costs and made it difficult for farmers, especially subsistence farmers, to obtain the inputs needed to plant and get goods to market, resulting in a growing dependency on food aid. By late 2020, the pandemic had already added an estimated 120 million to the already 135 million people experiencing a food crisis in 2019. Within the areas in which War Child is working, the risk of severe malnutrition and famine is growing exponentially.

• (1545)

The third pressing issue is the lack of government and health infrastructure in many countries embroiled in conflict, which many of you know about already. Seventy low-income countries are unlikely to achieve majority vaccination coverage rates until 2023 or 2024. This is no secret, and the underlying cause is no mystery.

[*Translation*]

We can do more in the weeks and months ahead, and we must do more.

[*English*]

The fourth challenge, very briefly because I'm almost out of time here, concerns the enabling environment fostered by the pandemic in which rogue regimes, armed groups and anti-democratic [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] violence, for example, in Ethiopia. Ethiopia and Darfur offer two such examples with devastating human rights abuses occurring against civilians.

[*Translation*]

In closing, I would like to assert my firm belief that the challenges I have outlined here today are not, for the most part, insurmountable.

[*English*]

To recover and to prevent future armed violence, children and youth living with war need more than high visibility, short-term interventions. They need integrated programs that protect their rights and shape their futures through education, access to health care, the rule of law, food security and economic opportunity. The pandemic has made realizing these goals more complicated, but it has certainly rendered them no less achievable.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Dr. Nutt.

Now I'd like to give the floor to Ms. Canjanathoppil. Welcome to the committee. The floor is yours for five minutes of introductory remarks.

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil (Executive Director, International Justice Mission Canada): Greetings. Namaste. My name is Anu George Canjanathoppil and I'm the executive director of IJM Canada. We are the world's largest anti-human trafficking organization and we believe that we can end slavery in our lifetime.

We are present in all regions where the most vulnerable populations are, and my testimony comes from that experience.

I want you to picture a woman, a mother in her sari, like me, with a baby, caught in the midst of a lockdown just trying to get home. She died of hunger and thirst on the train platform. The media was flooded with painful images of her hungry child tugging at her sari to wake his dead mother, and trying to drink milk from this dead woman's breast. It makes me ask whatever happened to that baby, or the millions of children who are more vulnerable now more than ever. She was just one of the 14 million people displaced in India because of the pandemic.

The phenomenon of reverse migration has left millions of poor, vulnerable people stranded, exposed to extreme violence and a life that makes death feel like a relief.

Online child sexual exploitation tripled from 400,000 to 1.2 million in 2020. In the Philippines alone, 65% of the time it's a relative forcing these children to commit sexual acts. This is in sharp contrast to the notion that we are safer at home. There were more than 56 million children out of school in just one country in South Asia. Of those, more than 10.1 million are child labourers. Globally, we witnessed a spike in child marriages during the pandemic, resulting in 13 million more girls forced into early marriages.

This evokes a pertinent question. Are our children safe? We should care because we may have been responsible for this.

The year 2020 changed many things, but not the way we consume goods. Consumption has, in fact, increased. The products we consume continue to be made by those enslaved and trafficked. It is our irresponsibility that has contributed to getting people into this vicious cycle. Therefore, it is our responsibility to respond.

Our privilege is what causes us to think that as long as education is provided, jobs are there, drinking wells are there and poverty is addressed.... However, if a child or a woman is raped on the way to school or the well, or a father is working as a slave to provide one meal a day for his family, then we have a serious lacuna in what we believed was a solution in addressing poverty.

Communities need food, water and education, but before poverty in these communities can be addressed, the violence must be dealt with. IJM is focused on addressing that gap. We do this by rescuing victims, bringing criminals to justice, restoring survivors, strengthening justice systems and ending violence by ending impunity.

There are three regions I want to talk about today: Latin America, Southeast Asia and South Asia. All these regions have targeted the Canadian government as allies in the pursuit of the advancement of international development.

The feminist agenda is meant to elevate the rights and privileges of women throughout the world. For women to be elevated to an equal place in society, economic empowerment is needed. That's what the Canadian government has fought and continues to fight to accomplish. However, true economic empowerment cannot happen amidst a context of rampant violence. The story of the woman in the beginning is a clear example of that.

Global Affairs Canada is a crucial player in the pursuit to protect women and children from violence in the Northern Triangle. Canada can help fund a tech consortium, which will scale protection through innovative approaches. They can help Guatemala fund a gold standard of trauma-informed services for the healing and restoration of victims of violence. Andean countries have identified Canada and GAC as a stakeholder in making the protection of women and children a priority in their countries. Seven out of 10 women and girls are victims of violence in Bolivia. There is an opportunity right there for us to impact change.

Southeast Asia, the area oftentimes referred to as the manufacturing corridor, is largely powered by migrant workers and their children who are under extreme exposure to violence, trafficking and slavery, all of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19. With Canada's investment, we believe we can produce an intervention model to end slavery in the supply chain in these areas. This alone has the potential to provide protection for 17 million people—all because of Canada's commitment to freedom.

Finally, that leaves us with South Asia. As you know, India is a valued trading partner and is a strong economic force. Canada's proposed supply chain legislation, the modern slavery act, will require higher scrutiny for companies importing goods into Canada. By investing in initiatives to partner with the Government of India to protect its citizens and children from violence, we can dramatically mitigate these potential negative effects. The act would actually do what it says, which is end modern-day slavery.

As a survivor of violence myself, I have committed my work to the theory of change because I have seen it work. It is what motivated me to lead the rescue of 10,000 people, but I have had a second motivation as well. It is fear. It is the fear of not having anyone show up. Fear always lies with the victims, which is so often women and children and never with the perpetrator.

I'm not a powerful influencer. I'm just another one of those women who fall into the statistic of being a victim of violence once, but each one of you—everyone sitting here—has the capacity to make history at a time like this. It's a time where everyone takes comfort in looking inward and trying to protect themselves, their community and their country. You have been willing to use your influence to

impact change. You have the power to no longer allow violence to happen unchecked and to no longer tolerate it as a nation and as people. Imagine what that could mean to the lives of those languishing in violence, slavery and hopelessness.

What will you do so you don't have to see pictures of a precious baby boy orphaned because of the effects of violence on his now-dead mother?

Namaste.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you so much to our witnesses for their powerful opening remarks.

We will now go into our first round of questions. They will consist of six minute segments each.

The first of them goes to Mr. Genuis. The floor is yours.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Thank you to all the witnesses.

Ms. Canjanathoppil, thank you so much for your powerful testimony. To those who are interested in learning more about this connection between injustice and poverty, there's an excellent book written by the founder of IJM called *The Locust Effect*. I know we have very limited time in these hearings but I would encourage those watching and other members of the committee to make note of that book, *The Locust Effect*. There are obviously many more stories and much more that can be said in book length than we can hear in five minutes.

I wanted to ask you two questions, both of which you touched on. How would you compare Canada's existing laws around supply chains to other models that exist around the world? What countries should we be looking to that have good, effective models of trying to advance human rights through the management of their supply chain?

My second question is about fighting online sexual exploitation. There are, of course, likely cases of victims in the developing world and perpetrators in Canada. That's a new phenomenon we can counter, so what can we do to better represent in our justice system the rights of victims who are not Canadians, and do more to ensure we are prosecuting perpetrators in Canada, even if the victims have a limited voice within our system because of where they're located?

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: To begin with, Canada is the only country among the G8 that is not effectively positioned with legislation that can impact change in addressing modern-day slavery. That is the first place we can start looking into things. Yes, we are in the process of working through that. But even if that bill comes into play, until and unless there is a specific way we can impact how the goods are produced in developing countries.... I mentioned Southeast Asia, the manufacturing corridors. If we are not able to impact that, we are going to continue to ensure we are contributing to the global slavery index.

In response to your second question, the online sexual exploitation cases have tripled, as I mentioned, and that is a very conservative number, to be honest, because we are basing it on the number of reports that have come in. Several perpetrators are from Canada. We have been able to work in partnership with the RCMP here to identify one perpetrator whose sentence was increased.

What makes it possible for them to continue to do it? It is in the dark web, it is in silence, nobody knows what you're able to do at a time like this, and you know you're not going to be tracked back if there are, say, a million perpetrators out there. We might be lucky if we manage to get to a point where you can arrest a few. That is why the partnership IJM has with the Philippines government, the national security force there, and with the RCMP here is so crucial to addressing the crime and making sure there is a deterrence, that people think twice before going online and purchasing sex for five dollars from a child who is five months old.

• (1555)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you for sharing that.

Let me try to get a couple of quick questions in, in the time I have left. We've had some discussions in Parliament around the company MindGeek that runs Pornhub and the featuring of child pornography on their site. Some Canadian victims have been speaking out.

I wonder if you could speak to the accountability of companies like that and Internet service providers and others. What role is there for them and for the government in pressuring them to shut these things down?

Also, I wonder if you could speak about what kinds of aid spending can advance justice. If the government were to say they're going to set aside a certain amount of money to specifically deal with justice issues, how could that money be spent most effectively?

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: Absolutely.

As far as corporations that have taken responsibility for their acts, we saw an unprecedented shift in Australia, where a financial institution was caught for being the channel where people could purchase sex from children online. Then they committed a few million dollars to making sure that they would reverse the bad effects of the channel that actually promoted online sexual exploitation of children.

The same can be applied with every corporation. It doesn't take too much for a financial institution to understand that a few dollars like this on a regular basis is going to a certain channel. It doesn't take much for anybody to investigate and get to the root of tracking

where this money is going, why it has been spent in such small amounts, and all the irregularity of the options that are available using these channels.

That's just financial space, though. There are several other ways that corporations can step up and respond.

In the interest of time, I'll respond to your other question on what a kind of investment is. IJM hopes to protect half a billion people by 2030. It is working. It is possible. We started with a goal of rescuing 1,000. We have gotten there. We have rescued thousands.

We know it is possible to get there and rescue half a billion people if there is an investment of \$700 million. To put it simply, \$3.30 Canadian is what it takes to identify, rescue and restore a victim, and that will lead to the bigger number of protecting a few million more. If we were to protect half a billion people, the investment would be \$700 million globally.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Genuis. That's your time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Landry, I saw you raise your hand, but it is at the discretion of the committee member to address questions to the witnesses. Perhaps you will have a chance to come back to it next time.

[*English*]

I would now like to give the floor to Mr. Fonseca for the next six-minute round, please.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our three witnesses for their testimony and for giving this very powerful insight, as the chair mentioned.

I want to begin my questioning with Dr. Nutt.

Dr. Nutt, War Child has been adapting programming in accordance with local programming. Are you able to provide us with an update and/or expand on what has become of your radio-based distance education program, which you mentioned in your testimony, or the distribution of dignity kits to women?

That's my first question. We've heard about this radio-based type of programming—you mentioned it—in the Congo. Can you do a deep dive and take us through that and how that works, and let us know how it's working out for your organization?

• (1600)

Dr. Samantha Nutt: We started engaging in using the basic technology of radio.... It's actually modelled after farm radio, which started in Saskatchewan in the 1950s. We looked at areas where children were having difficulty accessing school and where a lot of girls—particularly in the eastern Congo—were being held back from school because of high rates of sexual and gender-based violence.

Families were not allowing their girls to go to school because they became very concerned that they would be attacked along the way. That presented a number of issues for those girls in terms of their access to education, as well as the increased likelihood that they would then find themselves in early or forced marriages because they were considered to be a burden on the family and not actually physically in school.

With initial seed funding from The Wellspring Foundation, we looked at using radio as a technology. In conjunction with a lot of Congolese actors and various other teachers and personalities, we recorded these radio-based educational sessions. We deployed teaching assistants to those communities, so where the girls couldn't go to school, school then came to them. It wasn't limited only to girls' participation because if you're deploying a teaching aide to a community and piping in the lesson, you want all children who need to be able to access school to be able to use those lessons.

We started at the secondary school level, and we found that within 18 months we had higher matriculation rates—so, higher graduation rates at the appropriate grade level—than the national average. We were seeing about 85% to 90% of girls who were then successful as a result of that. That was the pilot program. It involved a few thousand kids.

Then more recently, with support from the Government of Canada through GAC, we have been able to expand that to focus, in conjunction with the Congolese government, not only on areas that are now affected by violence, where kids were being held back from school, but on where kids were not able to because of [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] restrictions. We're about [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] into that now, and we're seeing some very good results.

There are a few constraints. Obviously, now we can no longer deploy, or it's a bit more complicated for us to deploy, the teaching assistants because of public health measures that need to be in place. However, where we're not able to accomplish that, we've offset it through other means—for example, by having access through telephone and that kind of thing.

We're seeing extremely good results. We're also working in Uganda to implement a very similar kind of program.

What makes it unique is not just that it's easy for kids to access; it's also that it's at a higher level of education that goes beyond primary but includes secondary.

As for the hygiene kits, this continues to happen. We're using that a lot and making sure that families have access to what they need, whether it's soap or other essential supplies, in places like Sudan, South Sudan and elsewhere.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Yes, that's great. It sounds like this is working through the pandemic and it may be the way forward for distance learning.

I want to ask you a question in regard to something that was reported, and you mentioned today, that about 90% or more—in 2018 it was 98% of your staff throughout the world—were local to the region where programs were being carried out. What are the advantages of working primarily with local partners for your program implementation?

Dr. Samantha Nutt: We have always done that. We have always prioritized. In fact, that is why we exist. We exist to try to decolonize aid and aid approaches in the sense that we work with local partners, they design the programs, they run the programs and implement the programs. We have either local or regional actors at all levels of our organization, including at the country director level, and they are the ones who are implementing those efforts. This means that during the COVID pandemic we have been somewhat more resilient in terms of our field approaches. We have strong robust local networks and those programs have been able to continue, whereas organizations that have a large reliance on an external expatriate infrastructure obviously have seen some of their activities curtailed as a result of the pandemic.

We believe very strongly that the best kind of humanitarian efforts invest in local capacity and make it possible for those communities to then rebuild and to do it on their own terms and with the priorities that they have identified. Our focus is always education, access to justice and economic development, and they're the ones who are driving that.

Again, it speaks to how Canada runs its aid programs. If we want to move the dial forward, we have to move beyond short-term, short-sighted interventions. We have to think about the structural challenges that children are facing in these contexts, and have a long-term view of the problems of war and poverty and abuse and exploitation, and commit for longer periods of time to see that kind of transformational change realized.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Thank you.

I have a question for Ms. Canjanathoppil.

On October 29, 2020, Bill S-216, an act to enact the modern slavery act and to amend the Customs Tariff, was introduced in the Senate. I know it's something that you've backed. Why is it important that Bill S-216 or legislation like it become law in Canada?

• (1605)

The Chair: Give a brief answer please, in the interests of time.

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: Because decisions like that impact decisions in developing countries.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: That's a quick answer.

What gaps in the Canadian legal framework would this bill address?

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: The fact that we are not able to scrutinize how these products get into our country makes it a law without teeth, makes it something that does not in the longer, larger scheme of things benefit those who are in developing countries and who actually make products for us to benefit from.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Fonseca.

[Translation]

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank our witnesses for their valuable contributions to the work of this committee. This does not happen often. We rarely have the opportunity to hear testimony in the language of Molière, so I wanted to thank Ms. Nutt and Mr. Landry for giving me this pleasure today.

Since the beginning of our work, we have heard from many people that the pandemic has had a negative multiplier effect on the schooling of children in conflict zones. Ms. Nutt pointed out that children in conflict zones, where living conditions are precarious, are used to this kind of lack of interest in school programs. What we were told is that this is accentuated by the effects of the pandemic at the moment.

Several witnesses told us that youth who were no longer in school often found themselves in the labour market or were dragged into the hell of prostitution and human trafficking. We know that 2021 has been designated as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. Quite ambitious targets have been set by the United Nations for 2025.

Do you think that, given the pandemic, these objectives will prove to be too ambitious and that there will be pitfalls along the way?

Dr. Samantha Nutt: Is the question for me or for Mr. Landry?

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: It is addressed to whoever wishes to answer it.

Dr. Samantha Nutt: Mr. Landry didn't get a chance to answer, so maybe it would be good if he answered the question.

Mr. Guillaume Landry: The question is important. On the subject of child labour, it is interesting to note that, for once, Molière's language is perhaps a little less rich than Shakespeare's.

[English]

We will make the difference between work and labour.

[Translation]

In French, we only talk about “travail”, a word that reminds us that work is allowed. The word “travail” implies permission. Indeed, work is not prohibited as a right of the child, being notably a means of education.

It is what are known as the worst forms of child labour that are prohibited, and that's what we're looking at this year. We want to celebrate actions to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including prostitution and sexual exploitation in all its manifestations, as well as the use of children in armed conflict, mining, the chemical industry and agriculture using chemicals.

In this sense, you have to be careful. It is rare that slippage occurs quickly. For example, just because a school is closed doesn't mean that 10 days later a child ends up in a prostitution ring. There are patterns that lead to a gradual reduction of options, and most of

the time, the child feels that he or she is the one who has made the decision to enter into an exploitative dynamic.

This notion we have that a child must have been kidnapped before being forced into some form of exploitation is often not the right one. Simply closing doors and denying children opportunities is enough to make them believe that they have made that decision themselves. However, no child should consent to his or her own exploitation: that is the basic principle.

In this regard, it is really interesting to look at an issue that was discussed earlier: the extraterritorial legislation that Canada adopted several decades ago. Yet we are one of the countries that use it the least. The solution to a problem does not always lie in new legislation, and sometimes it is simply a matter of applying existing laws.

Budget cuts at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have affected the deployment of police personnel to Canadian embassies. The result is that now one police officer must cover many countries, which automatically reduces the ability to monitor cases of child sexual exploitation in the tourism and travel industry. When compared to a country like Australia, a very small percentage of Canadians are prosecuted, convicted or found guilty of exploitative acts committed abroad. It begs the question, are Canadians better people than Australians? I'll leave you to debate the question.

You also need to look at the United Kingdom, where, over the past 15 years, Internet service providers and credit card companies have developed collaborative ways of tracking and monitoring illegal activity on the Internet. In Canada, we are just at the beginning of this conversation. I think it's important to mention that there are very concrete models that would allow us to collaborate robustly with the private sector to stem phenomena such as these.

Let me emphasize that most of the patterns of child labour exploitation occur in agriculture. We should also not forget the informal economy, which is a major factor in the sexual exploitation of children, in particular. The approach of buying a package deal from an airline to go and exploit children is no longer a reality. Before the pandemic, people would go to a site to rent an apartment in a small community and organize locally. So it is the exploitation itself that has shifted to small communities through the informal economy. They see the exploitation, but they don't necessarily have the means to respond, and that's where we have a responsibility.

• (1610)

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: You haven't left me any time for questions. I will have to hand over to my colleague.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Bergeron.

[English]

The final questioner in the first round is Ms. McPherson, please, for six minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for joining us today. This has been very interesting and very important testimony.

Throughout this study, we have heard over and over again that one of the big risks we're looking at during COVID-19 is that we may lose those gains, those development gains that we've made over the past 10, 20 and 30 years. We're certainly hearing that again today.

Now, as the representative who is at the end of asking questions, it appears to me that the best thing I could do to get information from our witnesses is to give you an opportunity to talk about maybe those one or two top things that you would like Canada to undertake. This is a report that will be given to all parliamentarians. I'm wondering if I could pass it to each of you in turn and if you could just talk about the one or two things that you think the Government of Canada needs to do in the short, the medium or the long term, or immediately. What are the things we need to do? What do we need to prioritize?

I'll start with you, Mr. Landry.

Mr. Guillaume Landry: I feel I should give the floor now to Dr. Nutt because she did that for me, and I would probably speak too much. I should maybe take the last round to be polite. I'm sorry about that.

Ms. Heather McPherson: That's very kind of you.

Dr. Nutt, go ahead, please.

Dr. Samantha Nutt: Thank you.

In terms of the top things that I would recommend, Canada's contributions to ODA have been basically stagnating for many years now. We still are coming in at well under the target of 0.7% that was set by the United Nations.

My bigger concern here is that, as we go forward and endeavour to pay off the trillions of dollars in global debt that's been accrued as a result of the pandemic, we're seeing that many countries, including the United Kingdom, are already looking at cutting their official development assistance through that process to be able to make up some of those gains. I would say that one of the most important things Canada can do is to continue to buttress its ODA contributions and to make sure that for those contributions it is really thinking very strategically about what kind of aid has the most impact. The kind of aid that has the most impact is locally driven, locally supported and longer term. It is targeting the structural challenges that exist within countries, including around education, access to justice—which we've heard a lot about today—and economic development, especially for women.

A lot of the issues we've been talking about—recruitment of young people into armed forces, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation—all come down to a lack of protection, a lack of protection infrastructure, a lack of justice, a lack of education and a lack of opportunity. If our aid dollars are being mobilized to go beyond short-term band-aid type solutions and if we're thinking about education as part of a humanitarian infrastructure and not as something that happens after food, water, shelter and blankets, but something that happens at the same time because it's so critically important and because it helps deal with children's vulnerability then we're going to

see that we're able to make a long-term difference in the lives of these kids.

I've taken enough time and I want to pass the floor over, but that's what I would say. Let's not let aid be the first casualty of our deficit-cutting when we get to that day, because it's really important.

• (1615)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you so much for that.

I'll pass that over to Ms. Canjanathoppil.

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: Thank you.

I have just three points to share. I come from the field. I've had to make decisions about whether or not to go on a rescue operation for want of funds. The areas that IJM has been working in have been slavery, online child sexual exploitation and other atrocities that are happening across the world.

At this point, I think the most important investment needs to be made in the space where we can directly address the problem of slavery by investing in the supply chain, and we need to make sure that with regard to all things that impact Canada directly, we're investing in that space and identifying industries that force us into consuming things that we don't want to be buying from people. That is one place.

The other place is the partnership. There is already limited partnership between the governments of Canada and the Philippines. If there is an investment that is possible to make sure that we can increase the investigations capacity in the Philippines specifically, because that is where the largest online sexual exploitation is happening, if we can invest there and if there can be a partnership there, these two things would probably lead to protecting 70 million people in the next 10 years. I'm happy to provide a plan if the committee would be willing to respond.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you so much.

Mr. Landry, it looks as though you have one short minute left.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guillaume Landry: Thank you.

Stable government support is important. More than ever, we see the importance of working on prevention and building local capacity that can help us respond to unforeseen events, emergencies, pandemics, armed conflict or natural disasters. In order for us to truly define endogenous child protection systems that can respond to these challenges, whatever their nature, we need to stay away from politically salient hot topics, avoid constantly upsetting priorities and stabilize our approach with long-term support. These are the most important tools. Perhaps we should also debureaucratize the project launch processes, which are very long and hamper efforts.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much, Ms. McPherson.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Landry.

[English]

We will now go to our second round of questions. The first speaker will be Mr. Diotte for five minutes.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Thank you so much.

I know that we've covered a lot of ground. I thank all of the witnesses for being here. It really is fascinating stuff and vitally important.

Right now, of course, everybody is talking about vaccines and COVID. I'm going to ask a fairly broad question. I'm wondering if it concerns any or all of you that, following the failures regarding our own vaccine procurement, our federal government right now is ordering the COVAX vaccine that was meant primarily for developing countries.

I'll just leave it open to whoever wants to weigh in first on that.

Dr. Samantha Nutt: I don't mind speaking more in my capacity as a public health doctor on this front. Quite apart from Canada's decision to execute its options through the COVAX program, which would provide us with additional vaccine supplies by the end of June, hopefully our own vaccine procurement will have accelerated before then and we won't need those supplies and we'll be able to ensure that countries that are actually still desperately holding out for additional support will be able to receive it.

The bottom line here, though, is that we have now 70 low-income countries that are very unlikely to have access to vaccines in the foreseeable future and in the countries in which War Child Canada is operating, we are looking at best at a scenario where one out of every 10 people is vaccinated by the end of this year and possibly into early next year.

What concerns me the most is what conversations are taking place to ensure that we do have a much more aggressive strategy around ensuring that particularly vulnerable, high-risk communities have access to the vaccination, that that vaccine is being deployed, that the capacity exists to be able to vaccinate. I'm thinking very specifically around issues of migration and displacement. We are one of the few organizations very active on the border between Sudan and Ethiopia in response to the arrival of Tigrayan refugees that took place over the last couple of months. Many tens of thousands of them are arriving. The more you have this kind of displacement, the more vulnerability, the more crowded conditions.... You've got very few humanitarian organizations that are on the ground, implementing there right now, because of the constraints related to COVID. You are talking about parts of the world where COVID could really become entrenched, where new variants can emerge, and it is a threat to all of us.

My own position on this is that we understand, as Canadians, as much as anyone else right now what it feels like to watch other countries get vaccinated while our seniors face real consequences in long-term care homes. We, I hope, will not endeavour to do that to any other country on this earth. I hope that we will be thoughtful and [Technical Difficulty-Editor] moving forward on this issue and that we will recognize that it is in all of our best interests to ensure that the most vulnerable, and especially those living in impover-

ished, crowded conditions, are vaccinated as soon as humanly possible and have an equal stake and an equal share in that opportunity.

• (1620)

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Excellent. Great answer.

Would anybody else like to wade in on that one?

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: I'm happy to.

COVID struck us at a time where we had to deal with something that was not in our expertise, but it aligned with what we were doing, which is delivering things that needed to be delivered to those in vulnerable communities. We have partnered with nearly 340 organizations, institutions and NGOs and provided over 38,000 people with direct crisis relief due to COVID; provided emergency supplies, groceries; reached over four million people through awareness-raising efforts about vulnerabilities from COVID-19; helped over 3,000 survivors receive ongoing aftercare services; implemented nearly 570 new violence response or mitigation efforts alongside our partners; provided over 358 cases of remote assistance to [Technical Difficulty-Editor] public justice officials including provision [Technical Difficulty-Editor] assisted in consultations.

All of these things were in just a few districts. I'm taking these numbers from memory of a particular state. The need just increases with the vulnerability. It is important to note that we need to be able to respond to those who are in segments of society. It requires being aligned with the government and that's what we have been doing thus far, making sure that they get the benefits they deserve.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Diotte.

Next is Ms. Saks for five minutes, please.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all of our witnesses who have come today. This has been a really important discussion on so many of the aspects that feed into the lack of safety of children in conflict areas and what's going on during COVID.

I previously, in my life before being an MP, worked with organizations dealing in trafficking, particularly in relation to women and girls. I do understand the realities and the complexities of trying to stop the human trafficking chain and also rescuing and rehabilitating victims of it. During the best of times it's really challenging and especially during a pandemic.

During the pandemic, we know that children are at home, but we also know that criminal networks are still out and about in these areas and involved in what they're trying to achieve. Has the exploitation industry changed in the past year in terms of the pandemic? Our Minister of International Development, Karina Gould, committed \$1.6 billion towards the COVID response in January of this year. We know there's a shadow pandemic of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. What should we be considering in terms of adapting our approaches to the COVID response in relation to gender-based violence and human trafficking?

• (1625)

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: If I may specifically call on the example of how we started our work in certain countries, we started by addressing sexual exploitation of minors. This was in private homes. This was in brothels. This was in places specifically designated for this. We started by reducing violence in those places, and we succeeded. We were able to bring down the prevalence of minors being forced into prostitution from 88% to 1.6%.

We saw that as the perpetrators realized this investment was going in a different direction, they got creative. That is how they moved to the online space. Now with the pandemic, we have seen they have become more creative than ever. They have realized they can explore different sites and make sure they make them a lot more challenging to navigate, identify and rescue, or even get the perpetrator who is exploiting children this way.

We have relied heavily on technology to make sure we are a step ahead of the perpetrators, to make sure we can impact change. Investment in that space is so crucial. Now more than ever, everyone is relying on this high bandwidth Internet, which makes it so easy and so cheap to access, plus the time.... The fact that everybody is working from home also makes it possible for them to have this as a side hustle in generating income and also exploiting children. So yes, that is a crucial investment.

What I think is important is also to be able to influence the space where the government can influence, ensuring that countries that are using certain websites that very categorically invest and ensure they are having online explicit content that is exploiting children. There are ways we can halt those like Pornhub, for instance. It took years before Pornhub and the issues around that were addressed. I think now is the time to invest in that space and also address the problem.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'd like to move in a bit of a different direction with this and talk about the victims, the women and children who are victims of human trafficking and this type of sexual exploitation, whether it's happening at home or through criminal networks. Also, perhaps you could talk about the challenges of addressing trauma and helping victims, especially in the COVID space we're in now.

Ms. Anu George Canjanathoppil: You bring up a brilliant point. It's incredibly challenging, because these are victims. Even if you're rescuing them, they are not able to get out of the victim mentality. They feel they don't deserve a life of freedom. It is almost impossible not to have these conversations or take them to a child care home where people are dealing with the challenges of the pandemic. Yes, that has been very difficult.

How we have been able to tackle this problem is that a lot of these initiatives are led by survivors who have been there, done that, having conversations with children who have been rescued. It is not easy. It has been an extremely difficult task for IJM to address this in the midst of the pandemic. We have been creative, is all I can say.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: It looks as if the chair is signalling that we're nearly out of time, so thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Saks. I appreciate it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chairman, I would have liked to discuss the issues of release and diversion with Mr. Landry.

I find it interesting that this is one of the effects of COVID-19, but it seems like a default effect to me. I am concerned about whether these youths are actually being taken care of when they are released or their cases are diverted, so that they don't end up in the hands of employers who will exploit them, or worse, pimps.

Mr. Landry will not be very happy to hear me ask him about the particular situation in the Tigray region, which is home to refugee camps, two of which remain closed to the staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Landry, what do you think of the situation and fate of children and women in the context of this conflict?

• (1630)

Mr. Guillaume Landry: These are big topics to cover in two and a half minutes.

[*English*]

In English, the translation is "diversion".

[*Translation*]

This is the translation of the term *déjudiciarisation*. I wanted to clarify this detail.

Diversion can prevent children from being deprived of their freedom and ending up in a process where they do not belong and which would not at all be the solution in their case. Referral to courts and incarceration should be measures of last resort.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: On a point of order, I'm sorry to interrupt but I don't have translation.

The Chair: Okay. We will see if we can fix this.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guillaume Landry: Legal action is an important process. There's a world of timely opportunities. We've seen a significant number of countries, including Indonesia, Morocco, Burkina Faso and Colombia, take direct action. Many children have been released so that prisons don't become places of contamination. Incidentally, some questions must be asked both in Canada and abroad about what action should be taken under these conditions.

As you said, this also carries a risk. Do you take these children out of prison and ultimately leave them to their own devices and see other patterns of exploitation emerge?

There's a great deal of variation. However, many organizations have been working to support these processes and to ensure that, ultimately, releasing these children is only a step rather than an end in itself.

A great deal of expertise has been built up in this area. This morning, UNICEF held a global webinar, highlighting lessons from the past nine months regarding justice for children and the work done in this sector.

We could also talk about Yemen. Children are being put on the front lines without access to humanitarian rights. This violates the United Nations Security Council resolution 1612 and many other applicable international laws.

The situation is extremely troubling, since all the children's rights are potentially being violated. There are no control measures to help them. Once again, I'll repeat the messages of my two colleagues: the local structures are there.

How have these structures been used in the past to prevent or lower risk? It's through prevention and local action, hence the value of both.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Landry.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: The final round this afternoon goes to Ms. McPherson, again, for two and a half minutes please.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you again to all the witnesses. I wish I could take you all out for coffee. I have so many questions and such a short amount of time.

I want to follow up on something Mr. Landry just talked about, and that is Yemen. What would it mean to the children of Yemen if Canada stopped selling arms to Saudi Arabia? What is the role Canada can play in terms of taking our dollars out of that conflict? I'd like you to comment on that.

Mr. Guillaume Landry: It's a key question. It's not only the sale of arms but also the role in peace processes and the mediation that Canada has been able to play, for instance, in the Great Lakes in Africa. That role has been rather discreet in the Middle East in recent years, so the complexity of that particular conflict and the involvement of so many external actors are certainly key problems. The reduction of the space for the UN to play its role in such a context is also quite critical.

Yes, there's looking at the arms trade. There's also looking at the pressure on Saudi Arabia and the UN and the incapacity of the UN to take action in light of very strong evidence when it comes to violations committed by countries that have lots of influence on the UN.

This something we need to be extremely careful about, and Canada could play a role in that.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I see that the U.S. has paused those sales to Saudi Arabia, which is an excellent step.

I'm also wondering if you could comment on our contributions in terms of ODA—our development contributions to Yemen—and whether or not they are enough at this point considering the humanitarian crisis we're facing there.

Mr. Guillaume Landry: In my opinion the answer is integrated in the question. There is so much more that needs to be done. We need to look at Yemen also as being in the migration path of so many populations from eastern Africa that go through Yemen to reach other places. That vulnerability is key, so it's not only looking at the situation with Yemen but having a regional perspective on things. It's not only supporting multilateral organizations that have really benefited from Canada's assistance and should continue to do so, but probably diversifying the options and the supports to civil society organizations, which are very much at the top of the list of actors that are supported by Canada.

This would make a big difference, as would looking at Djibouti and Somalia. All of those are really connected, so it's about not having just a country focus.

• (1635)

Ms. Heather McPherson: That's an excellent point. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, this takes us to the end of our scheduled time with our witnesses this afternoon. On our collective behalf, I would like to thank all three of them for their testimony, for their expertise and, most importantly, for their extraordinary service around the world. We all feel that we would have liked to have much more time with you. Time is limited.

I would like to remind our witnesses that if you have comments you weren't able to make, the option is very much available to direct them in writing to the office of the clerk so that members of the committee can receive and review them.

I will now ask our panel to disembark the ship; we have some committee business that we will continue once you have had a chance to disconnect. Once again, thank you very much for your testimony this afternoon.

We'll suspend for a couple of minutes.

• (1635) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We're back with the next item of business, which is the notice of motion that was brought to us by Mr. Chong. Mr. Chong would like to speak to his motion.

We've allotted roughly 15 minutes. We have some other business to do this afternoon in camera, so we will start with the discussion on the motion that Mr. Chong has brought.

The floors is yours.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move:

That the committee express its deep concern about material identified in UNRWA textbooks which violates basic norms on human rights, tolerance, neutrality and non-discrimination, at a time when UNRWA is receiving funding from the Government of Canada, and report this motion to the House.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): I am looking for my notes. This caught me by surprise. I thought this was happening later in the meeting, so I'm just a bit off guard.

I will tell you right now that I'm in support of the motion, but I have an amendment that I would like to make to it. I just need to find that amendment.

If I could take one minute, please, I'll find it in my email. I'm sorry.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have Mr. Oliphant's version in front of me. I'm happy to help if it will save a few seconds.

The Chair: Mr. Oliphant, in the spirit of collaboration and collegiality, if you agree, we will ask Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Absolutely.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Oliphant proposes the following amendment: "That the committee express its deep concern about certain educational materials circulated to students by UNRWA during the pandemic that violates the values of human rights, tolerance, neutrality and non-discrimination, at a time when UNRWA is receiving funding from the Government of Canada, and report this motion to the House."

Is that correct?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Yes.

I believe Heather might have a subamendment to that as well, but let me just speak to this for a moment and say that the government, through the Minister of International Development, has expressed this concern and I think it is appropriate for this committee to express it as well. This is important. I think Canadians expect the funds that are transferred to UNRWA to be used well. I know there have been many undertakings to ensure that they are used well. There are mistakes that happen from time to time. We need to ac-

knowledge this problem, and I think that's what we're doing in this motion.

It's a slight rewording of it. I think we would be very happy with it, but I'm also open to a subamendment that we may have to deal with first.

As they say in the States, I will yield to Ms. McPherson, at the chair's discretion.

• (1640)

The Chair: Of course. Thank you, Mr. Oliphant; and yes, we'll go straight to Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't know that's what they said in the States.

The subamendment that I would like to include into the amendment proposed by Mr. Oliphant is the words "in error". I think it was very clear that we were in unprecedented times, that there was an incredibly fast and challenging switch to online, to paper learning, to a number of different changes to the way that UNRWA was able to provide education in their work, and this slipped through. It was very clear and they've made a statement that has indicated that it was done in error and that it has been rectified, so I think it's important that it is articulated within this motion as well.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. McPherson.

I have Mr. Chong next.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I know we're on the subamendment. I'll just say first that I support the amendment that was introduced by Mr. Oliphant, but I cannot support the subamendment moved by Madam McPherson. I think it stretches credulity to say that it was in error, so I personally won't be supporting the subamendment. However, I will be supporting the amendment.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think this is an important motion, and I'm happy to support the amendment, as Mr. Chong has said.

The subamendment's implication that this is kind of a one-off typo—something that has never happened before—just doesn't really reflect the realities of the legitimate and serious long-standing concerns that have been associated with UNRWA. There are legitimate different views on how to respond to that, but it's not as if somebody just accidentally mistranscribed something and the language appeared there, right?

This is a question about material that was put in the textbook—not a typo or an accident. I think the amendment from Mr. Oliphant reflects that reality. The subamendment does not.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Marty Morantz: I do support Mr. Oliphant's amendment. I don't support the subamendment.

I don't know if all of you have had a chance to go through the report that triggered this, but there's a January 2021 report from IMPACT on this. It's a 46-page report. If you read it in its entirety, it's damning. It's indicative of a pattern of behaviour, if you will, going back a number of years, but it is mostly focused on the current events.

I think, given the comprehensive analysis in this report, it behooves us to take it at face value and have an appropriate debate on this.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do believe that we should have debate, but it's very hard for me to debate something that I am not a part of. I have read what UNRWA has said with respect to this, and I simply have decided that I think we need to take that for what they say—so I'd be supportive of Ms. McPherson's amendment—and then continue to work with UNRWA to ensure it never happens again.

Absolutely, we want to ensure that there are appropriate educational materials, that we do not tolerate anti-Semitism in any fashion, and that we expect all the materials that Canadian dollars are being spent on to uphold that as well. I think that adding “in error” does not diminish that whatsoever; it simply acknowledges what UNRWA has told us. I think we need to keep pushing UNRWA always to ensure they're doing their work in the way that we and our international partners want them to do it, but I don't think it serves anybody to not take them at their word for what they're saying.

That's why I will be in support of the subamendment and then the amendment.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to read a bit from the statement that UNRWA provided, because Mr. Morantz does bring up the point that we should take reports at face value. The report we were provided actually points to the fact that some of this material had previously been identified already as not being in line with UN values and was mistakenly included and states:

As soon as the issue was identified, the Agency conducted a thorough review of the entirety of the self-learning material that UNRWA developed and took steps to address it.

It also states:

In order to ensure that all educational materials provided to students are those which have been approved by the Agency as in line with UN principles and values, the Agency developed an innovative, secure Agency-wide self-learning platform which will contain all of the learning materials for UNRWA students. Currently in its final review process, the platform will be launched in coming days.

They are not only apologizing for the error, but they are clearly identifying that it is an error, and they are taking steps to ensure that error doesn't happen again. I think it's important that we acknowledge that and we recognize that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Thank you for that, Ms. McPherson.

I do appreciate the argument. I don't know if you've had a chance to go through the 46-page impact report in detail to see the magnitude of, essentially, the offences. I could go through some of the points here, but it would take some time. I don't know if the committee would allow that time.

It's important that when you look at the report as a whole—as my colleague Mr. Chong said—it really stretches credulity to say that this was an error. However, having said that, I would be willing to propose a friendly amendment to the subamendment.

Instead of saying “in error”, I would propose a friendly amendment that would say, “which UNRWA claims was an error”.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morantz.

We'll go to Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I can accept that. I don't want to split hairs on this. I want us to get on with it. I think the fact that they have claimed that it's error... It's actually probably true that we can't be the judge and arbiter of that. It allows them to say it was an error. It allows the reader of this motion to accept the fact that it may not have been. I choose to believe it was an error because I am trying to work with UNRWA to make sure they don't do this again.

I think that is a reasonable suggestion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Monsieur Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I'm sorry that I temporarily lost communication. I was a little too quick to rush into the in camera meeting. I can now take part in the debate.

I had the chance to let Mr. Chong know that I would be supporting his motion. By the way, I'm very pleased that there are amendments. However, I just want to point out that I'm a little unhappy that we're in this situation simply because the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA, admitted that it made a mistake.

To add to the statement made by the minister, it seems that we're seeing some overkill when we know perfectly well that the UNRWA plays an absolutely crucial role for many Palestinian refugees who need the organization's support. We also know, since we've made note of this as part of the committee's work, that the organization is experiencing significant financial issues and that, by repeatedly attacking it in this manner, we'll only increase the financial difficulties that the organization may face.

You'll say that a mistake was made and that it wasn't a minor error. We should expect that an organization that receives public funding will be held accountable for managing the money. I fully agree with that. This makes me think that we, as members of Parliament, are facing another somewhat similar situation. You have probably all received emails from civil society organizations complaining about the Israeli consulate in Toronto promoting Israeli army enlistment. This is against Canadian law, which prohibits the enlistment of Canadian citizens in foreign armed forces, or at least foreign armed forces from recruiting on Canadian soil.

The Israeli consulate in Toronto said that this was a mistake. We then decided to not make a big deal out of it. The consulate went on to say that it wasn't entirely a mistake, because the advertising for Israeli army recruitment was primarily—I would even say exclusively—aimed at Israeli citizens living in Canada, not Canadians.

As long as we take the word of the Israeli consular authorities, I don't think that there's any point in making further statements. On the contrary, I think that we're making unnecessary further comments about an extremely unfortunate situation. The minister has already had the opportunity to speak publicly about the situation on behalf of the Government of Canada. This led the UNRWA to admit that it was a mistake and to implement mechanisms to prevent this type of mistake from happening again.

In my opinion, the matter is closed. I'm a little unhappy that we're in this situation today. That said, I acknowledge that my colleagues are entitled to bring this type of issue before the committee. We'll be voting, and I'll start by saying that I'll be voting in favour of the amendment and the subamendment. If my colleague, Ms. McPherson, accepts the friendly amendment moved by Mr. Morantz, I'll also vote in favour of the subamendment.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

[*English*]

Just before we go to Ms. Saks and Dr. Fry, from a procedural perspective there is no such thing as a friendly amendment. We will have to deal with the amendment as it was introduced, but let's see where the conversation goes.

Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I too have read the IMPACT-se report in its entirety. I think the amendment as it stands, with the subamendments and the suggestions, highlights really our intention. I agree with MP Oliphant on this. We do want to make it clear that we expect accountability. We do acknowledge that an error was made. We accept that UNRWA is taking responsibility for that error and knows that it needs to report back to us.

As we go through this conversation, I would just like to highlight, perhaps to Mr. Morantz, that UNRWA does not produce textbooks. It produces supplementary materials. The heart of the problem is really textbooks that circulate within the jurisdictions. This is something that we have limited control of in the context of this room, of this committee. Recognizing that, however, I do know that the minister and those who are working on the investigation process are diving deep into really the source of the problem so that we can encourage neutrality in the programs that we support on behalf of the children being educated and that are under the responsibility of UNRWA.

I do agree with Monsieur Bergeron that supporting refugees is critical. These are populations that are part of our role as a global citizen to support. They are communities in crisis and in conflict, which UNRWA does serve. In that role, we have an important role to play in ensuring that neutrality does stay. If we don't continue with the funding that we have, if we don't continue our partnerships to help support neutrality in the region, then.... As an Israeli citizen myself, I can't express enough the need to have good partners on the ground who are supporting neutral culture and neutral practices, from the education of children right on through civil society.

So I support both the amendments. Hopefully, we can move forward with this.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Saks.

Dr. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I won't really repeat what everyone said. I agree with Rob Oliphant. I agree with what Ms. Saks said. I agree with what Stéphane Bergeron said. I can support the subamendment, but I just think we need to be very careful that we continue to support, as Ms. Saks says, neutral people who are trying to help on the ground. It's fairly difficult when you have differing views and differing conflicts.

I think we could get around this and talk about the subamendment, which I think you'd get full support for, but I think we need to also try to remember how things really work in zones in which there is conflict, with differing opinions and everything. Again, we cannot interfere with the sovereignty of a country that is writing its own textbooks. We're not writing those textbooks, and UNRWA is not. I think UNRWA got a very strong, positive report. I read that report fully. It was positive. It was strong. It talked about the integrity of the architecture, the vision and all of that. I think we need to just say, okay, we accept that it might have been a mistake. Let's move on now without trying to make this into a massive incident with partisan overtones.

Thanks.

The Chair: Dr. Fry, thank you very much.

Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm new to this, so I'm not sure if this is the right time. However, I don't like the friendly subamendment—or the non-friendly friendly subamendment, I guess—from Mr. Morantz. Unfortunately, I do feel like that is insulting to UNRWA. It is unnecessarily questioning their truthfulness, I guess. I do struggle with that.

So I would not be supportive of that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

Just before we go to Mr. Genuis, procedurally we have two options. One is to basically vote on Ms. McPherson's subamendment as she introduced it, which is the one that's formally before the committee, or to agree, through unanimous consent, to replace her subamendment with Mr. Morantz's. That does require unanimous consent.

Yes, Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, can we have a “sub-subamendment”? It sounded like Mr. Morantz was trying to amend the subamendment. Is that possible?

The Chair: That is possible. He called it a friendly amendment. Procedurally, that gets us onto turf that isn't in the rule book, but a sub-subamendment is possible.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Morantz may wish to put up his hand and move the subamendment, or perhaps he may not—

Hon. Michael Chong: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair, just so that we're all on the same page.

My understanding is that you can't move a sub-subamendment.

The Chair: Let me just get the advice of the clerk on that, Mr. Chong.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Erica Pereira): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You can only have one subamendment at a time.

The Chair: Okay, I stand corrected.

Again, the two options are unanimous consent to replace Ms. McPherson's subamendment with Mr. Morantz's—but it does require UC—or a vote on the subamendment that Ms. McPherson proposed to the original motion.

• (1700)

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I have a point of order, then, Mr. Chair.

I would say that we don't have unanimous consent because Ms. McPherson has not given it. Therefore, we are not able to deal with that, so I would ask the chair to move us into a concluding debate on the amendment that Ms. McPherson made. Then we can go afterwards.

It could be re-amended; it's just that you can't nest too many subamendments. You can revisit, but you can't do that—point made. I think we simply need to move on and go back to the amendment that Ms. McPherson made.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Oliphant.

Is it the committee's will to return to the discussion on the amendment?

I see that Mr. Genuis has his hand up.

Is it on that point?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I just have a very brief point. I don't want to hold this up. I agree with proceeding in that fashion.

I just want to say that we have to acknowledge that this is a very big deal. This is highly anti-Semitic material in educational materials that are being given to children in a conflict zone. Given the history, the idea that we would just take UNRWA's word for it.... At the very least, trust, but verify, right? We know what they said, and we can report what they said. I think that's the best way to proceed, but I think saying, “Oh, it's just a mistake,” misses the real significance and gravity of the implications of putting material like this in front of children. I think we're all supportive of the idea of engagement with the Palestinian people. When I was in the territories, I visited an UNRWA school, as well as a security lab funded by our previous government that facilitates security co-operation between the Palestinian Authority and the Israelis. There are opportunities to support engagement, but this is a very serious issue.

I'll leave it there. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Can we then return to the discussion on Ms. McPherson's amendment? Are there any other points, or have we had a fulsome enough exchange of views to be able to vote on the amendment that she proposed?

Mr. Marty Morantz: I'm not sure how we would do this procedurally because I haven't been around long enough, so I'll take your word that we can't have sub-subamendments, but maybe it might be the word “claims” that's an issue. I'd be open, for example, to changing it to say “that UNRWA has stated was in error”. I think maybe the word “claims” could be interpreted to.... I can see how Ms. McPherson would be concerned that the word “claims” would bring into question the veracity of UNRWA's statement, so I'm just wondering if “stated was in error” would be satisfactory.

The Chair: Mr. Morantz, thank you for the idea. If that generates UC, then we could basically replace her amendment with that language and proceed with a vote on that, but it would have to draw unanimous consent from the committee.

We'll give Ms. McPherson that chance to respond in a minute, but can you just insert that into the entirety of the subamendment?

Mr. Marty Morantz: After the word “pandemic”, insert “which UNRWA has stated was in error”.

The Chair: What is the reaction from colleagues? Would that draw unanimous consent from the committee: to basically take that language and replace Ms. McPherson's amendment with it?

Ms. McPherson, do you want to comment on that?

Ms. Heather McPherson: I could live with it, but I would prefer my own, so I wouldn't give unanimous consent.

The Chair: Okay, this was just in the interest of time, colleagues.

I don't want to rush this. I think this is an important issue. We've had a fulsome exchange.

The next step, procedurally, would be to vote on Ms. McPherson's subamendment. Then there's always an opportunity to reinsert a further amendment after that.

Madam Clerk, if we could ask colleagues to hold thumbs up or down, we'll do a count.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Are we now voting on Ms. McPherson's amendment?

The Chair: Yes, exactly.

[*English*]

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, if it's okay with you, I'll proceed to a recorded vote, because that's what's indicated in the terms of the House motion.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, I would like a recorded vote. This is too iffy.

• (1705)

The Clerk: The recorded vote is on the subamendment of Ms. McPherson.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: That takes us back to the main motion.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a subamendment to the main motion.

Hon. Michael Chong: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, it doesn't carry us back to the main motion; it carries us back to the amendment.

The Chair: My apologies, Mr. Chong. That is correct.

Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Marty Morantz: I'd like to propose a subamendment to the main motion. After the word "pandemic", add the words "UNRWA states was an error" between the word "pandemic" and the word "that".

The Chair: Mr. Morantz, is this a subamendment to the main motion or to the amendment we just passed?

Mr. Marty Morantz: It's to the main motion.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I believe that would have to wait.

The only thing we can amend now is the amendment that I made as a subamendment.

You can amend my amendment, but I don't think that works. You would have to come back and the chair would have to rule whether or not that was an acceptable subamendment, after we passed a discrete subamendment and an amendment. That would be up to the chair's understanding of whether you could revisit it again.

Right now, we have to debate my amendment as amended by Ms. McPherson and the committee. I think that's where we're at.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Are there any views on that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chair, can we read the amendment again, please?

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

[*English*]

Madam Clerk, do you have the language in front of you?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, unfortunately, I do not. I was dealing with a technical issue when it was moved.

Mr. Oliphant, maybe—

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Unfortunately, I still haven't had a chance to go back.... I think Mr. Morantz, ironically, has it.

Mr. Marty Morantz: I would be happy to reintroduce Mr. Oliphant's amendment. It reads as follows: "That the committee express its deep concern about certain educational materials circulated to students by UNRWA during the pandemic that violates the values of human rights, tolerance, neutrality and non-discrimination, at a time when UNRWA is receiving funding from the Government of Canada, and report this motion to the House."

I think I have that right.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: That's my amendment, but it's now been amended by Ms. McPherson, so it's exactly what that was except that "in error" has been added to it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I'd just like to—

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Does Ms. McPherson have the amended amendment from Mr. Oliphant? Can you read it first?

Ms. Heather McPherson: I can give it a stab, if that would be helpful.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: It reads: "That the committee express its deep concern about certain educational materials circulated to students by UNRWA during the pandemic in error that violates the values of human rights, tolerance, neutrality and non-discrimination, at a time when UNRWA is receiving funding from the Government of Canada, and report this motion to the House."

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: For my own personal enlightenment, Mr. Chair, does this change anything in Mr. Chong's main motion?

• (1710)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Chong, do you wish to read your original motion for comparison?

[Translation]

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In my motion, the amendment moved by Mr. Oliphant and Ms. McPherson replaces, in English, the following sentence:

[English]

“material identified in UNRWA text books which violates basic norms on”

[Translation]

by, in English:

[English]

“certain educational materials circulated to students by UNRWA during the pandemic in error that violates the values of”.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: We also have a subamendment moved by Marty Morantz. This subamendment seeks to add four words, in English:

[English]

“which UNRWA claims was”. That would be placed in between the words “pandemic” and “in”. That’s the current subamendment in front of the committee.

The Chair: That’s to the amendment.

Mr. Chong, thank you. I think we’ve had extensive discussion on the arguments.

Does anybody else want to come in and speak to the substance or to the procedure?

Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I just want to understand. I was trying to find it in writing. Are we back to “claims” or “stated” in what Michael just read?

Hon. Michael Chong: I’m sorry—it’s “stated”.

The Chair: Mr. Chong read “claims”.

Hon. Michael Chong: I read “claims”, but I believe Marty said “stated”. That was my mistake. I’m sorry.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I will just say that I can live with “stated”, if that helps us move somewhere on this. I think that’s fair. I think “claims” has a loaded nature to it, and “stated” is just putting it out there. I think that could be something I could live with.

The Chair: Do I detect an emerging consensus on this?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Yes. Call the question.

The Chair: All in favour of the subamendment to the amendment proposed by Mr. Morantz? Is there anybody opposed?

(Subamendment agreed to)

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I have another amendment, however.

The Chair: Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Now we have an amended motion. I would like to strike the last few words of the motion about report-

ing this to the House. I think it can be a motion of this committee. The minister has already made [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] as strong as or stronger than this. I don’t think it adds value to our work by taking it to the House. I think our committee is strong enough that we can do that, and I would now move that we strike “and report this to the House”.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Oliphant has moved another subamendment striking the final words “and report this to the House”. Is there any discussion on this amendment?

Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I don’t support that. I think we should report this to the House.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Fonseca.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Mr. Chair, just having heard this, I support this change. The reason is that what I’m seeing here is really a political football. It’s being tossed around. I think we’re addressing it here at committee.

Respectfully to the members, I would say let’s stop these games; let’s stop tossing this political football around. I think we all know where this is looking to go, I would say [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] most of the Conservatives.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fonseca.

Dr. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I want to agree with Mr. Oliphant’s amendment because I do believe that the minister has made a strong statement, which is obviously a government statement. I think that we as a committee have now agreed that we’re going to put forward a motion amongst ourselves, and I think, as Mr. Fonseca says, that all this is seeking to do is to stir up a partisan thing in the House. I think I’ve heard Mr. Bergeron say over and over that some of the things we deal with are far too important for us to play games with. I would agree with Mr. Oliphant’s amendment to remove those items.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Fry.

Mr. Diotte.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Well, I think that if we’re proud of our work as a committee, we want to involve the general public and as many Canadians as possible, so of course it should go to the House—

Hon. Hedy Fry: Canadians don’t even know what you’re talking about.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Excuse me. I’m talking.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Order.

Ms. Fry, you should apologize for that.

The Chair: I think this was accidental, Mr. Genuis. She wasn’t on mute. She now is.

Mr. Diotte, please continue.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: She insulted my colleague and suggested he didn't know what he was talking about. That's unbecoming for a parliamentarian.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: One person at a time, Ms. Fry, please.

You know, we work hard, and I think that committee work is very important. A lot of Canadians don't understand the good work that committees do, and if we're proud of this motion and we all agree to it, why not spread it as far and wide as we can? It's a no-brainer, so I say that we report it to the House.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Diotte.

Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'm going to concur with my colleague Mr. Oliphant, as well as Mr. Fonseca and Dr. Fry. To be frank, the minister stated clearly on January 22 that she is deeply engaged in understanding what is going on and getting to the bottom of the issue and is actively involved with counterparts in UNRWA and our other funding partners to address the situation.

That is a public statement. It is being dealt with by the ministry, the minister and her team, and while we can debate this as much as you want, the public already knows that the government is engaged in this. It's very nice that the committee is taking the time to be involved in a very fulsome discussion about it, but as Monsieur Bergeron said, why do we need to beat a dead horse here? It is already being addressed. We're in alignment on the importance of this. It must be looked into, and this committee stands on the strength of its convictions. It's already out in the public. It doesn't need more. It's already there. There's nothing to hide.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Saks.

Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I introduced the motion, so I just wanted to address some comments that were made. I don't play games. I introduced this motion because I feel strongly about it. I respect members who disagree with the substance of the motion. Ms. McPherson has voiced her concerns about it. I respect that position, but I'm not playing games here. It's an important issue.

This is not the first time this has happened. Other countries have suspended their funding to UNRWA because of recent reports of wrongdoing that has taken place. I think of the Netherlands. I think of Switzerland. This is not a trivial issue. I believe that it's important for us to make a statement on it, and not just within the confines of this committee, which is why I think the chair ought to report this motion back to the House.

The government, the executive branch, has clearly stated its position on it. It issued a statement on this. I think as a co-equal branch of our system, we have a responsibility to voice our opinion on it. One way we do that is not just by adopting the motion at committee and having it stop there but by having the chair report it back to the House so that all of our colleagues, officially, on the record in Hansard, will know what the position of this committee is.

I think that it should be reported to the House, but I respect those colleagues who don't want to do that. Let's not cast aspersions as to why any member is voting one way or the other on this. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Respectfully to all, a few people have mentioned that the minister has issued a statement on that. I don't know what that has to do with the question of this amendment, which is, when a committee comes to a conclusion, do we just decide that among ourselves and leave it there, or do we do our function, which is to come to conclusions that we then report to the rest of our colleagues?

We're tasked, as the foreign affairs committee, with focusing on particular issues, developing expertise on them and then reporting those conclusions to the House. On issues dealing with the Good Friday accords, on issues dealing with any number of other things, why would we choose to report those matters to the House and then on a case dealing with UNRWA, where there seems to be substantial agreement on the concern, at least based on what people are saying, why would we decide in that case not to report it to the House?

If it's an important issue, which I think it is, and if the government has something to say on the issue, which by all indications it does, and if we want our colleagues to take note of it, then of course we should do our job, which is to report this and inform the House.

Colleagues, if we choose not to, I think it communicates to the public something about the seriousness with which we take this issue. Given that we have chosen to present it to the House, in every case in the past when we've adopted motions like this, why would we not do that in this particular case? I think that would raise big and legitimate questions.

I'll leave it there. Thanks.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to make a couple of points on this. In no way do I think I am trying to make this a silent or a private motion. This is a motion that'll be passed by committee, and all motions that are passed by our committee are in the public realm. This will be a public statement from this committee. I would agree with Mr. Genuis in that the reality is, if we do a study, if we engage and have witnesses and do that full work of a study, we should report it to the House. That is not this case.

This is our making statements as parliamentarians. All our colleagues can find out about it. If we wanted to, we could send it to them. There's no reason the chair can't make this a wider distribution of a motion. It is the reporting back to the House and having a House debate on this issue that I don't think will be helpful in the Canadian realm. It is not helpful in a pandemic. It does not strengthen our relationship. It does not build the structures for peace in the Middle East that we are trying to do. That is why I don't think it should go to the House as a report from us.

I don't think we've done that kind of work on this. It will be a public motion. There's no way that this is quiet. It is there. It is something this committee has stated, and that is our responsibility as members. We can do it as individuals. Frankly, if someone in the House wants to raise this issue, they have the right to have a motion. They have the right to all kinds of other ways that this can be raised in the House. The work of this committee is not furthered by our reporting it to the House, so I think it is better for us to leave it here and monitor the situation. If there is a repeated problem, we should do a study, and we should address it there in a thorough way, but that's not what we've done today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Dr. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you, Chair.

I reiterate what Mr. Oliphant said.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Fry.

Mr. Morantz.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Chair, I think my points were made by Mr. Chong and Mr. Genuis, so I'll withdraw my hand.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, I'm mindful of the time, but also don't want to short-circuit our discussion. I think we had a fulsome exchange on this subamendment. Are colleagues ready to vote on Mr. Oliphant's subamendment?

Madam Clerk, perhaps we should also do a recorded vote on this, just for precision and clarity.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: That takes us to, if I'm not completely mistaken, Mr. Chong's main motion. Is there any further discussion on the motion as amended?

• (1725)

Hon. Michael Chong: I'd like to have a recorded vote just because it's not clear who supported it and who didn't. I want to indicate my support.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Madam Clerk, we'll go to a recorded vote on the main motion.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Colleagues, that takes us to the end of that discussion point.

We are going to reconnect in camera. I am very mindful of the time. We are going to have to do a hard stop at 6:15. That gives us, minus connection time, about 45 minutes to make progress on the interim report.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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