

Minister  
of International Development



Ministre  
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Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

April 9, 2024

Mr. Ali Ehsassi  
Chair,  
House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs  
and International Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A OA6

Dear Mr. Ehsassi:

Pursuant to the Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government of Canada to the recommendations made in the twenty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) entitled: “*The Rights and Freedoms of Women and Girls Globally, and in Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia*”. Thank you for pursuing such an important study.

In recent years, there has been a decline in respect and protection of human rights globally, compounded by a range of crises, including the war in Ukraine and the Middle East, COVID-19, climate change and shifting political landscapes. This global decline has particularly impacted women’s and girls’ human rights. For example, certain countries have witnessed crackdowns on women’s human rights through the implementation of policies and legislation changes. These have led to increased rates of gender-based violence, limited access to education, and increased violence and silencing of women human rights defenders. These trends are part of a broader anti-democratic movement, which seeks to erode rule of law and freedom of speech, and which threatens the strength of civil society; the very foundation that provides essential protections for the rights and freedoms of women and girls.

Canada is steadfast in its leadership globally for the promotion and protection of women’s and girls’ human rights. Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy puts the rights of women and girls at the center, recognizing that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Sustainable development can only be achieved when women’s and girls’ rights are protected and when women and girls are empowered as full, equal participants in their lives and their communities. Canada has an opportunity to provide leadership in improving global respect for human rights and to protect and empower women and girls, including in these countries where their rights and freedoms are particularly at risk.

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Within this context, the Government of Canada has carefully considered the recommendations presented in the report and has assessed initiatives that are ongoing or have been completed, as well as key considerations, in the Government's Response. Global Affairs Canada consulted partner government departments, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Public Safety to develop a comprehensive response. Together, we continue to monitor the situation and identify where there is room for improvement in Canada's approach and look for additional opportunities to contribute to the protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of women and girls globally, and in Afghanistan and Iran.

By contrast, Canada considers the situation of rights and freedoms of women and girls in Saudi Arabia to be qualitatively different than the situations in Afghanistan and Iran. In comparison, Saudi Arabia is pursuing a wide range of reforms under its ambitious Vision 2030 which have improved women's social, economic and human rights. We share avenues for meaningful and mutually respectful dialogue with Saudi Arabia on these issues. With the restoration of our bilateral relations, Canada and Saudi Arabia now have the benefit of a fulsome diplomatic dialogue which can enable meaningful exchanges between our countries on such issues.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Government Response to the Report's ten recommendations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ahmed Hussien".

The Honourable Ahmed Hussien, P.C, M.P.

Enclosures

**Government Response to the Twenty-Second Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled “The Rights and Freedoms of Women and Girls Globally, and in Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia”**

**Recommendation 1: That the Government of Canada cooperate with international organizations to end sexual violence that women and girls are subject to in conflict and in other situations.**

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada has a Feminist Foreign Policy approach, including a Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) that prioritizes the safety of women and girls in conflict situations, as well as their full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace, security, and related efforts. Under the FIAP, Canada is committed to addressing the high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and cutting, experienced by diverse women and girls, including in conflict and other contexts.

Per its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, Canada puts women and girls, in all their diversity, first and foremost in its response to conflict, crisis, and humanitarian settings. The WPS agenda is implemented through the National Action Plan on WPS, of which SGBV is a core tenet. Canada provides funding, expertise, capacity-building and support to organizations (including international non-governmental organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies working to advance the WPS agenda, to bolster women’s role in peace processes and to address conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in a number of fragile and conflict-affected settings. Furthermore, Canada’s partnerships with local women’s rights organizations and feminist networks are critical in advocating for women’s and girls’ rights, building awareness of those rights in communities and with decision-makers, and bolstering service delivery and other response efforts.

Under Canada’s National Action Plan on WPS, Global Affairs Canada continues to take actions that respond to this recommendation. These include advancing international assistance programming that prevents and responds to SGBV and CRSV.

Canada also cooperates with international organizations to end SGBV including at the Human Rights Council (HRC) where Canada leads a signature resolution to counter violence against women and girls. As the lead on a resolution, Canada presents the resolution within the HRC, facilitates negotiations, and engages with a wide array of stakeholders to reach agreement and adoption. In 2023, the HRC adopted the Canada-led resolution on preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention. Canada’s work at the HRC also contributed to establishing the mandate for a UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, and Canada supports its continued renewal, as it commemorates its 30th anniversary in 2024. Canada continues to apply diplomatic pressure to end child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), including by contributing to the development of the first-ever United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on CEFM and continuing to co-lead (with Zambia) it on a biennial basis in UNGA’s Third Committee. Similar to HRC, to co-lead a resolution means to present the resolution, facilitate negotiations and engage stakeholders to reach adoption.

**Recommendation 2: That the Government of Canada undertake the following measures to support the education of Afghan women and girls: fund the expansion of alternative, independent education systems delivered in Afghanistan by non-governmental organizations, and fund and resource efforts to enhance the quality of these education alternatives so that they can be internationally recognized.**

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Taliban policies and restrictions on women's and girls' access to education above the primary level present significant programming challenges in the education sector inside Afghanistan. Overall, funding to the education sector is decreasing as the Taliban's actions continue to make it more difficult to deliver programming in a principled manner. All donors condemn the actions of the Taliban in the education sector, including regional and Muslim-majority countries. In recent months, the forced handover of community-based education classes run by international non-governmental organizations to local education directorates has affected nearly 30,000 students being supported by Canada (80% of those are girls). It has also raised credible concerns that the Taliban plans to invest heavily in religious instruction through madrassas, at the expense of core subject instruction (e.g., maths, sciences, etc.). This has impacted Canadian funded partners, such as BRAC International, which supports community-based education for primary school children. BRAC is now exploring alternative options for continuing to provide education to Afghan children through extra-curricular learning activities.

Although Canadian funding to the education sector in Afghanistan has decreased due to the difficult operating environment and budget pressures to meet other Government of Canada priorities, Canada remains actively engaged with likeminded donors and partners to advocate for and advance learning opportunities for Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and the region, predominantly through online and regional education systems and partners. Canada is currently exploring ways of refocusing community-based education resources towards alternative learning programs in Afghanistan that focus on girls outside of the formal education system controlled by the Taliban. Canada is also particularly keen to engage with Muslim-majority and regional countries to promote Afghan women's and girls' education, leveraging these partners' influence and expertise, which may open more opportunities for alternate forms of education.

Despite these challenges, Canada is supporting two new initiatives that advance secondary and tertiary education opportunities for Afghan women and girls. The first will support online learning opportunities focused on girls' secondary education. This will provide learners with the appropriate tools and resources to successfully complete their studies with an internationally recognized diploma. Canada also aims to connect and empower a growing network of learning entities that are focusing on solutions to restoring access to education for Afghan women and girls, creating learning communities where tools, resources and lessons learned can be shared to improve the quality and effectiveness of these approaches for Afghan women and girls.

**Recommendation 3: That the Government of Canada fund university scholarships for female Afghan transfer students to study at Canadian post-secondary institutions either virtually or in-person and with the aid of scholarships, and expedite study permits for eligible Afghan women and girls to study in Canada.**

The Government of Canada takes note of this recommendation.

Global Affairs Canada manages a few inbound scholarship programs for international students. Many of these programs are short term in nature (6 months or less) and premised on reciprocal partnership agreements with foreign post-secondary institutions. As such, they would not offer a meaningful or feasible mechanism to support the education needs of Afghan women and girls. Global Affairs Canada's Afghanistan Development Assistance Program is not currently prioritizing support for Afghan women to study at Canadian post-secondary institutions. It has been assessed that support to Afghan women and girls in the region presents the greatest opportunity to address the most critical education needs of Afghan women and girls. With this assessment in mind, Canada is planning new support to education initiatives for Afghan women and girls who already have secondary level education to access

internationally recognized university level studies in the region, empowering them to serve as leaders and drive change for Afghanistan's future.

Canada is aware that Afghan women and girls continue to face unique risks and challenges when it comes to education in Afghanistan. On this matter, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is actively exploring options to facilitate access to study permits for Afghan nationals. IRCC is also undertaking a review of the International Student Program to examine how it can continue to meet economic and social goals, including as part of our Strategic Immigration Review. A key focus of this review will be to continue to explore options for diversifying the student population in Canada, including the aim of bringing more Afghan students.

**Recommendation 4: That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada create a new temporary resident stream that enables women human rights defenders to seek immediate and non-permanent safe haven in Canada.**

The Government of Canada takes note of this recommendation.

Human rights defenders (HRDs) play a key role in protecting and promoting human rights and strengthening the rule of law, often at great risk to themselves, their loved ones, their communities, and the organizations and movements they often represent. HRDs with intersecting identities experience heightened and specific risks; in particular, women HRDs face obstacles, violations and other adverse impacts based on their gender in addition to the risks faced by other HRDs.

Canada's support for HRDs takes many forms and responds to changing needs and contexts. The Government of Canada's current efforts to support human rights defenders include a targeted refugee stream under the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program, which sets aside dedicated spaces to work with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other leading experts in global protection, including ProtectDefenders.eu and Front Line Defenders, to resettle HRDs at risk who are fleeing persecution in their home country. Under this stream, women HRDs are eligible to be resettled in Canada, though are not the exclusive focus of this stream. Women HRDs who have fled persecution in Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, and who do not have a safe place to permanently make their home, may find protection through this program. Women HRDs may also be identified for resettlement to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program by a private sponsor in Canada; or the Blended Visa Office-Referral program by the UNHCR.

In addition, while the dedicated HRD refugee stream offers a pathway to permanent residence, the Government of Canada has committed to re-engaging with Canadian civil society organizations on a possible temporary protection pathway for HRDs in need of protection, exploring efforts that could complement the existing HRD program. Work in this area to facilitate temporary protection for HRDs would include women HRDs seeking immediate protection in Canada.

**Recommendation 5: That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada increase the number of places in the current global human rights defenders stream of its government assisted refugees program to accommodate an increased number of applicants and their families.**

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada continues to be an international leader in resettlement. According to the 2023 UNHCR Mid-Year Trends report, in the first six months of 2023, Canada was second to the United States as a global leader in this area. The Government has significantly expanded its work in resettlement by increasing the number of resettled refugees admitted to Canada from 12,300 in 2014 to

over 51,000 in 2023.

Canada's resettlement programs are open to HRDs at risk, including women, alongside other refugees. In 2021, the Government of Canada created a dedicated HRD stream, working in close collaboration with civil society organizations dedicated to their protection. The stream initially created 250 new spaces for HRDs and their family members annually and was recently increased to 500 spaces in July 2023. From the program's inception, the Government has made it a priority to ensure that it reaches those most at risk, taking into account intersecting identities and a person's lived experiences, including but not limited to those at risk based on their gender.

**Recommendation 6: That the Government of Canada fund a program to support activists arriving as part of the human rights defender refugee stream and other relevant streams. Such a program could provide fellowships, training, networking opportunities and other resources that will allow and encourage their valuable human rights advocacy work to continue from within Canada.**

The Government of Canada takes note of this recommendation.

HRDs living in exile face specific and unique risks due to the nature of their work, in both online and offline contexts. These risks are exacerbated for HRDs with intersecting identity factors, such as on the basis of gender.

Attacks against HRDs are a manifestation of transnational repression. The Government of Canada is deeply concerned about transnational repression as a subset of foreign interference designed to target human rights and undermine democracy. Canada remains committed to working with international partners to develop strategies and tools to combat transnational repression.

Under existing resettlement programs, HRDs resettled to Canada arrive as permanent residents and benefit from comprehensive government-funded supports that take into account their individual needs. IRCC Settlement Program funds a range of settlement services that can be accessed by immigrant and refugee women such as mentoring, information and orientation on rights and responsibilities in Canada, women-only employment and language training, and gender-based violence prevention support. In addition, child-minding and transportation services are offered to ensure that women, who are often the primary caregivers, can access these services. Like others arriving as government assisted refugees, HRDs receive supports under IRCC's Resettlement Assistance Program, including immediate and essential services in their first four to six weeks in Canada, as well as direct financial support, typically for the first 12 months.

IRCC worked closely with civil society experts in HRD protection to design the dedicated HRD refugee stream, and civil society organizations play an important role in supporting HRDs once they are in Canada. Canada is committed to fostering the development of effective support networks for HRDs that create opportunities for HRDs resettling in Canada to continue their critical work. Since the establishment of the HRD stream, the Government has been monitoring its impact and exploring ways to improve the program. As part of these efforts, the Government will explore the possibility of a temporary protection pathway. Cross-departmental consultations have also taken place to discuss the specific and unique needs of HRDs resettling in Canada, including those who continue their work to advance respect for human rights. Consideration of how these needs can best be met are ongoing between relevant Departments.

Beyond providing refugee protection the HRDs having fled persecution, Canada works in multilateral forums to strengthen international rules and norms; provides the necessary platform(s) to advocate for open civic space; engages with local authorities through bilateral diplomacy; leverages partnerships with other countries, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and the private sector, including Canadian business

interests abroad; promotes responsible business conduct with Canadian business active abroad; and builds capacity, including through funding for human rights organizations, among other activities. Canada's work to promote respect for human rights defenders and their work is guided by Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders, which provide practical advice, tools and resources to Canadian officials at home and abroad. The Government continues to monitor initiatives to identify where there is room for improvement, and look for additional opportunities to work with HRDs, as well as state and non-state actors, to advance human rights.

**Recommendation 7: That the Government of Canada list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity as per section 83.01 of the Criminal Code, ensuring that provisions are made for eliminating any unintended harm for those with involuntary links to the group, such as conscripts.**

The Government of Canada takes note of this recommendation, and notes that Canada has already taken extensive measures against Iran and in particular against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

In 2012, Canada designated the entire Islamic Republic of Iran as a State Supporter of Terrorism under the *State Immunity Act*. On November 14, 2022, Canada designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regime that has engaged in terrorism and systematic and gross human rights violations under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA). As a result, numerous Iranian officials are permanently inadmissible to Canada, and current and former senior officials presently in the country may be investigated and deported.

Canada has also implemented some of the toughest and most extensive sanctions on Iran in the world, targeting IRGC branches as well as senior-level members of its leadership under the *Special Economic Measures (Iran) Regulations* (the Regulations). Since October 2022, Canada has listed an additional 153 Iranian individuals and 87 entities to the 202 Iranian individuals and entities already designated under the Regulations. The Regulations prohibit persons in Canada or Canadians outside Canada from engaging in a range of dealings, such as dealing in the property of any listed entity or individual. As a result, the cumulative effect of the Regulations is that all assets of all listed individuals' or entities in Canada are effectively frozen.

Furthermore, as a result of Bill S-8, *An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* receiving royal Assent on June 22, 2023, IRPA is now aligned with the *Special Economic Measures Act* (SEMA) to ensure that individuals sanctioned under SEMA are also inadmissible to Canada. This designation means that thousands of members of the regime, including many members of the IRGC, intelligence operatives, government officials, and judges, amongst others, are now inadmissible to Canada.

Determining whether to list an entity as a terrorist entity, including the IRGC, requires specific legal criteria be met and is the result of a rigorous process based on evidence, intelligence and the law. In order to be listed, the Governor in Council must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that:

- [s. 83.05(1)(a)] the entity has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity; or
- [s. 83.05(1)(b)] the entity has knowingly acted on behalf of, at the direction of or in association with, an entity involved in a terrorist activity.

The process of listing involves cross-government consultations and the preparation of security or criminal intelligence reports, which are independently assessed by the Department of Justice to determine if an entity meets the threshold for listing as set out in subsection 83.05(1) of the *Criminal Code*. The list of terrorist entities supports the application of *Criminal Code* provisions relating to the financing of terrorism, among other offences, and entities listed under the *Criminal Code* are subject to wide-ranging restrictions.

Law enforcement officials are continuously working to identify and assess entities that may meet the threshold for listing. The Government of Canada is continuing to look at appropriate actions to hold the IRGC accountable for its terrorist activities and to counter terrorist threats to Canada, its citizens and its interests around the world.

**Recommendation 8: That the Government of Canada leverage its position in international fora to build alliances with like-minded partners and call out and condemn countries, regimes and individuals responsible for human rights abuses.**

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada's commitment to upholding human rights is a critical component of its international engagement. Together, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Development are, working to strengthen Canada's "engagement and presence in the UN system to ensure a more effective, efficient, relevant and accountable UN that supports a rules-based international system, particularly so that it can better address those who are seeking to undermine democracy, human rights and the rule of law."<sup>1</sup> In this respect, Canada actively participates as an observer at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) by making strong statements that draw attention to concerning human rights situations and working with partner countries to integrate progressive and inclusive language into resolutions adopted by the HRC. Specifically, and most recently, Canada collaborated with a core group of countries to respond to the country-specific human rights situations in Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela. In February 2024, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, together with other feminist Foreign Ministers, delivered a statement about the ongoing human rights violations of women and girls in Afghanistan and urged the de facto authorities to put an end to systematic gender persecution. International cooperation between countries is an integral part of calling for state accountability in circumstances where there are violations of human rights and in underscoring solidarity with those impacted.

Canada is a consistent and strong voice for the protection and promotion of human rights in Afghanistan and Iran. For example, Canada regularly contributes to joint statements and supports side events at the HRC; Canada led the joint statement recognizing the deteriorating situation of human rights for women and girls in Iran at the HRC in October 2023. Canada remains a steadfast supporter of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on Iran, established by the HRC in October 2022, and the mandates of the UN Special Rapporteurs on Afghanistan and Iran. Canada also uses every opportunity to create a safe, enabling, and inclusive space for Afghan and Iranian human rights defenders to engage and contribute, including at the UN. This engagement is integral to better understanding the realities of people on the ground, including the situation for women and girls. These perspectives also help human rights mechanisms like the FFM to attribute responsibility for human rights violations and abuses and make recommendations on accountability measures with the goal of ending impunity and addressing the root causes. Canada has also been a leading proponent of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR process allows Canada and all UN member states to publicly hold other states to account for violations of international human rights and to make recommendations to improve human rights around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada Mandate Letter; Minister of Foreign Affairs Mandate Letter



Canada is actively engaged in the UNGA's Third Committee, which focuses on the situation of human rights around the world. In this forum, Canada has led the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran for 21 consecutive years. As the lead, Canada presents the resolution in Third Committee, facilitates negotiations, and engages with a wide array of stakeholders to reach agreement. This resolution remains an important component of meaningful international efforts to advance respect for human rights in Iran. It condemns persistent human rights violations committed by the Iranian regime against its citizens, including women and girls, and lays out concrete steps that the regime can take to meet its international human rights obligations. Each year, Canada partners with a core group of countries, as well as various human rights and civil society organizations, to improve the text in the resolution and secure support for its adoption. This resolution was most recently adopted at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of UNGA in December 2023.

Furthermore, Canada's strong international advocacy includes active participation in multi-stakeholder coalitions such as the Media Freedom Coalition, which advocates for media freedom and the safety of journalists and media workers, and the Equal Rights Coalition, a collaborative mechanism dedicated to advancing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Each coalition comprises a group of countries, civil society organizations and others working on the promotion and protection of human rights. These coalitions use their global platforms to take collective action on specific issues and cases. They leverage their mission networks to monitor human rights situations on the ground and engage in quiet diplomacy with governments on particular challenges. This is critical to maintaining meaningful and direct dialogue on human rights globally. At the same time, both coalitions issue public statements at either the local or international level according to an assessment that determines what action is best positioned to yield the most positive results.

Canada also continues to work on incorporating a human rights-based approach into all of its international assistance efforts abroad. This approach puts human rights protections and human rights principles at the forefront of the processes, goals, and outcomes of Canada's peace and security operations, humanitarian assistance, and development projects. This approach is promoted in various multilateral forums, including at the World Bank, as well as with civil society organizations abroad that work to empower and protect persons in the most vulnerable situations. For example, through the LGBTQ2I International Assistance Program, Global Affairs Canada partners with organizations like Outright International to improve socio-economic outcomes for LGBTQ2I people across the globe.

**Recommendation 9: That the Government of Canada increase its level of humanitarian aid and ensure that this funding remains stable and is invested in long-term projects that align with its feminist international assistance policy.**

Global Affairs Canada takes note of the recommendation.

Canada will continue to provide humanitarian assistance that aims to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain dignity of those affected by conflict and natural disasters. Canada provides humanitarian assistance within a well-established global system via experienced UN, non-governmental organizations, and Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners. Support through this system avoids duplication of efforts; allows for a proportional, timely, coordinated and needs-based response, centered around consolidated and prioritized appeals; leverages the complementary roles of different humanitarian actors; and channels funding to experienced partners.

Humanitarian needs have more than tripled in the past decade. In 2024, the Global Humanitarian Overview requires US \$46.5 billion to help more than 180 million people, up from US \$12.9 billion to help 52 million in 2014. Over the last three years, Canada's humanitarian programming averaged over \$1 billion per year. These spending levels have been achieved through ad hoc incremental allocations,

including those related to COVID-19 and the global food crisis. Canada is expecting to see a reduction in its humanitarian assistance spending in 2024 due to budgetary pressures and competing priorities.

In line with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada supports gender-responsive humanitarian action in a principled, needs-based, and timely manner. This includes integrating gender considerations across all policy and programming efforts to respond to protracted needs and those driven by natural disasters, sudden onset crises, and rapidly deteriorating contexts. Canada also supports targeted interventions that directly address operational gaps such as sexual reproductive health, and the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies and onset disasters. The Department continues to look at bringing humanitarian, long-term development and peace efforts to bear to address the root causes of humanitarian crises, and build the resilience of communities, where possible. This includes supporting greater coordination across areas of work and increased international investments of development funding in fragile and conflict-affected states. In many cases, the Government works within the nexus between humanitarian and development contexts, goals and priorities, and seeks to ensure that Canadian funding can contribute to short-, medium- and long-term goals.

**Recommendation 10: That Global Affairs Canada align its international development goals and other foreign policy goals.**

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada seeks to apply a feminist, human rights-based perspective to all its international policies and programs, including diplomacy, trade, peace and security, development, migration management and refugee protection, environment and climate action and consular services. For example, Canada's international development efforts are guided by its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which is part of its Feminist Foreign Policy suite. Moreover, the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) stipulates that all Canadian official development assistance must be provided in a manner that promotes international human rights standards.

Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy is rooted in the conviction that all people should enjoy the same human rights and the same opportunities to succeed. It recognizes that all people, regardless of their background, gender or intersecting identities, should fully benefit from equal participation in economic, political, social and cultural life. It also highlights that promoting rights-based, open and inclusive societies leads to a safer, more sustainable and prosperous world for the benefit of all.

For instance, *Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders* offers practical advice, tools and resources to Canadian diplomats working around the world and in Canada, to support human rights defenders. The guidelines are informed by the work and advice of civil society organizations and reflect the experiences of Canadian representatives abroad. The implementation of the guidelines is tailored to local contexts and circumstances, and to the specific needs of the human rights defender(s) based on their different lived experiences. The development and implementation of these guidelines is well aligned to Canadian international assistance priorities (i.e. FIAP, ODAAA) and ways of working by taking a feminist, human rights-based and locally led approach. At the same time, it is also delivering on key foreign policy priorities by supporting human rights defenders in all their diversity to contribute to protecting and promoting the human rights of all people and strengthening the rule of law thus, furthering a rules-based international order. Ultimately, this contributes to the whole-of-society attainment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.