



Election 2015 - Humanitarian Disarmament Policy Questionnaire

1. Canada's role in the international movement to ban cluster munitions stands in stark contrast to our leadership in the fight against antipersonnel landmines. Canada spearheaded the Ottawa Process and used its diplomatic muscle to push for the full implementation and universalization of the 1997 Ottawa Convention. Though the Convention on Cluster Munitions was largely modelled off the Mine Ban Treaty, Ottawa did not seek the same leadership role. Instead of leading, the Harper Conservatives decided that Canada should remain on the sidelines and never joined the core group of states leading the Oslo Process. Instead, Canada worked to water down the text to allow itself more leeway for interoperability. As a country that has never used cluster munitions, Canada had the opportunity to play a constructive role in banning their use worldwide. Instead, we used our international position to find ways to continue to fight alongside those who use them.

When the Harper Administration finally got around to ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions six years after its adoption, it did so with shamefully inappropriate legislation. Canada's ratification violates not only the letter but the spirit of the law. The loopholes related to investment and in interoperability are unacceptably wide. They drive a truck through the openings that Canada helped to create during negotiations on the text of the treaty.

The Green Party will lead by example and close these loopholes to ensure that investment in cluster munitions is expressly prohibited, and that Canada does not engage in missions with non-state parties that will be using cluster munitions. We will also amend the existing legislation to include positive obligations under the Convention, including a commitment to promote the universalization of the treaty. The Green Party will make the imperative of humanitarian disarmament a priority.

2. The work to stigmatize the use of cluster munitions, especially by our allies, must begin by taking our responsibilities under Article 21 of the Convention seriously. Instead of leaning heavily on a reading of 21(3) that negates our responsibilities under 21(1) and 21(2), we must reorient our approach to fulfill our obligation to inform allies of our common duties under the Convention. Canada must also refuse to participate in any mission that uses cluster munitions. We must make

this clear in the planning phases of the mission, through both political and military channels. Canada's limits must be absolute: the use of cluster munitions in a joint operation will be a deal-breaker. We must speak out publicly when cluster munitions are used, including by our allies.

3. The Green Party is fully committed to fulfilling Canada's obligations under the Ottawa Treaty. Green MPs will work to keep Canada on track to follow the Maputo Action Plan with the goal of banning landmines, clearing all mines, and supporting all victims and survivors by 2025. MPs will be guided by the priorities of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, including working towards the universalization of the treaty in diplomatic fora, stigmatizing landmine use and educating actors about their effects, funding and pressuring states to clear mines, and giving survivors the resources they need to recover physically, psychologically, socially, and economically.

4. Canada can return to a leadership role in supporting mine victims. Green MPs will advocate for a renewed financial commitment to mine action and victim assistance programs. The Green Party supports Mines Action Canada's call for at least \$1 per Canadian per year to be dedicated towards mine action.

5. The Harper Conservatives' refusal to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on the pretext that it would violate the rights of gun owners is an international disgrace, with dangerous consequences. Canada's deliberate misrepresentation of the nature of the Treaty was part of a larger strategy of Harper diplomacy to work against effective international disarmament. Our rejection of the ATT alienates Canada from our international allies. The recent sale of arms to Saudi Arabia belies the argument that Canada's arms control regulations are sufficient without the Treaty. The Green Party is committed to joining, ratifying, and fulfilling all obligations of the ATT.

6. The Green Party is committed to global arms control. Canada must fulfill its obligations under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This includes our commitment to restrict the brokering, financing, transporting, dealing, and transferring of all illicit arms. In order to fulfil these and other obligations, Canada needs strict export control on arms to ensure that Canadian weapons are not sold to human rights abusers, either directly or through third parties.

7. The Green Party will endorse the Humanitarian Pledge. We firmly stand with the international movement for humanitarian disarmament. It is unacceptable that Canada is not at the forefront of these efforts.

8. The Green Party's position on humanitarian disarmament is simple. We believe that the humanitarian imperative trumps all other political considerations. There are no circumstances under which the use of nuclear weapons is appropriate. The Green Party is committed towards working towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We believe that Canada needs a new approach to nuclear disarmament. Green MPs will push for an international legal mechanism to pursue disarmament, open to all states, including civil society and international organizations. While we are open to a number of approaches, we believe that negotiations should take place in a forum not subject to a veto, so that the interests of the few in maintaining the status quo are not allowed to stop progress. The goal must be clear: an absolute ban on nuclear weapons, the total elimination of existing stockpiles, and the fulfillment of obligations to support victims and survivors.

9. The Green Party will work to pre-emptively ban "lethal autonomous weapons systems," also known as killer robots. This must include a legislated ban on the research, development, deployment, stockpiling, transferring, trading, financing, and use of killer robots, as well as their use by our allies. While the Green Party already has reservations about the humanitarian effects of the proliferation of the use of armed drones, taking humans out of the equation is a red line that must never be crossed. The Green Party supports the work of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in "calling for a new international instrument to preemptively ban the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons, achieved through a new CCW [Convention on Conventional Weapons] protocol or another process."

10. The Green Party will support an international political commitment to avoid the use of heavy explosive weapons in populated areas. We cannot simply accept civilian casualties, trauma, and devastation as collateral damage. [It is estimated that 26,000](#) civilians have died in the War in Afghanistan. [In November](#), a Canadian military spokesperson said that we "can't guarantee" that no civilians are being killed in our airstrikes against ISIS. This attitude is no longer acceptable. When civilians pay the price for war, the effects last for generations. The Green Party will review domestic policy, legislation, and practice to develop operating policies that reduce civilian harm. Further,

while international law has much to say about this issue, stronger standards are both possible and necessary to ensure that civilians do not pay the costs of war. An international commitment would help to stigmatise the use of heavy explosives in populated areas and ensure there are consequences for those who ignore it.

11. The common wisdom about drones is that they allow for targeted assassinations without civilian casualties and risk to personnel. However, as the [New York Times](#) reported in April: “Every independent investigation of the strikes has found far more civilian casualties than administration officials admit. Gradually, it has become clear that when operators in Nevada fire missiles into remote tribal territories on the other side of the world, they often do not know who they are killing, but are making an imperfect best guess.”

We need to take the humanitarian impacts of drones more seriously and to look at the consequences of our allies’ policies and actions. The United States program of drone warfare has had devastating impacts on the people of Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Somalia. While it is possible that drones can play a productive role in peacekeeping efforts and can reduce civilian casualties, we cannot expect any positive developments without a serious, international conversation about the damage their use is currently inflicting. The Green Party will work towards the development of an international legal framework to ensure that the use of drones is under the strictest control and fully respects international humanitarian law.

12. The effects of the use of depleted uranium (DU) are long-lasting and devastating. As Green Party Leader Elizabeth May wrote to the Minister of National Defence following Stephen Harper’s decision to join the mission in Iraq, “The use of more than 400,000 kg of DU in US campaigns in 1991 and 2003 has had lasting and heartbreaking effects on human health and the environment in Iraq. The lack of any current obligations to assist with the clearance of DU has ensured that Iraq has not yet recovered. DU can contaminate soil and groundwater and its use generates huge quantities of contaminated military scrap and can create hotspots of persistent contamination. Recent conflicts have seen it used in predominately civilian areas and managing its legacy is technically challenging and costly. [...] While the US has never released the coordinates of all the uses of DU in Iraq, the Iraqi government has called for international help to clean up contaminated sites and for an international treaty ban on the use of DU. The United Nations General Assembly has already considered four resolutions on DU. Canada has remained in the minority, abstaining each time.” In

that letter, Ms. May urged the government to “encourage its coalition partners not to use DU during operations in Iraq or Syria, state publicly that it has done so, and clarify its policy on DU use in joint operations.” The Minister never wrote back.

The Green Party position is clear: DU is an indiscriminate weapon that must be banned. Further, we must stigmatise its use internationally and refuse to allow our allies to use it in joint operations. The calls for assistance from countries already contaminated by DU cannot be ignored. Canada can and must assist them.

13. The legacy of the last century of war is more than the immediate loss of life and destruction. The use of chemical warfare, nuclear weapons, Agent Orange, landmines, depleted uranium, and so many more weapons have had effects that last long past the time of conflict. While these weapons bring immediate wreckage, they also linger in the air, water, and soil to extend the devastation to future generations. Further, the use of fossil fuels and other heavy pollutants in war should not be minimized. It is civilians who pay the continued price.

Canada has a long way to go if we are to establish and promote strong environmental protections in times of conflict. We need to strengthen the regime of international law to ensure that environmental devastation does not happen with impunity. Where conflict cannot be avoided in its entirety, combat must take place under the strictest possible conditions, both to minimize the civilian toll and the environmental toll. The Green Party supports clearly defining “widespread, long-term and severe” damage to the environment, as prohibited in Protocol I (1977) to the Geneva Conventions to uphold environmental protection in conflict situations. Green MPs will call for a permanent UN body to monitor violations of international law and to address compensation for victims, including environmental damage. This body should be based on the UN Compensation Commission that was established by the Security Council following the First Gulf War.

14. The Green Party strongly supports the International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict and its three pillars: Prevent, Protect, and Prosecute. We cannot simply accept the reality of sexual and gender violence as inevitable. This means “putting women’s needs on the frontline” in a meaningful way. The Nobel Women’s Initiative has done extensive and courageous work to bring this issue to the public consciousness. Green MPs will call for increased funding for organizations working on the ground in conflict areas to prevent gender and sexual violence, for

leadership in the United Nations to pass meaningful and enforceable resolutions to protect women, and for prosecution in domestic and international courts to ensure that this violence no longer takes place with impunity. Sexual and gender violence is not acceptable collateral damage. We must take meaningful action to stop it.