NDP Response: Mines Action Canada

1. *Canada is a State Party to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which comprehensively prohibits cluster munitions and provides the framework for clearance of cluster munition remnants and assistance to victims. If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, what steps will Canada take to promote the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions?*

2. *If your party forms the next government, how will Canada stigmatize the use of cluster munitions by any state - even our allies?*

   New Democrats recognize the terrible impact that cluster munitions have on civilians across the world and know that cluster munitions must be banned. New Democrats recognize and affirm Canada’s commitment to never use, produce, stockpile or transfer cluster munitions.

   New Democrats have supported Canadian and international efforts to stop cluster munitions. New Democrats believe that Canada must lead by example in our actions so that other countries know what leadership on this issue looks like.

   New Democrats recognize that existing legislation in Canada has “loopholes” that allow Canada to collaborate with other countries in joint operations that could involve cluster munitions. New Democrats believe Canada must take a stronger stance and close these loopholes and honour the intent of the Convention.

   New Democrats will continue to condemn the use of cluster munitions and will work with global partners to stigmatize and share the stories of people affected by cluster munitions.

3. *The International Campaign to Ban Landmines has issued a completion challenge for all states to join the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines and for all mine clearance to be completed by 2025. Canada as a State Party to the Ottawa Treaty, committed to work towards the goal of completion by 2025 via the Maputo Declaration in 2014. If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, what concrete steps will the government take to ensure the work of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty is completed?*

4. *For many years, Canada was a leading (top five) donor to mine action and victim assistance programs. Canada has fallen out of the top five supporters of mine action and in some years out of the top ten supporters. If your party forms the next government, what steps will you take to return Canada to its traditional position of leadership on mine action funding? Would your government consider reinstating the position of Ambassador for Mine Action?*

   Landmines contravene basic principles of international humanitarian laws and are reprehensible weapons. Canada’s NDP are proud of Canada’s leadership on ending the use of mines. New Democrats will continue this proud tradition and will commit to making Canada a leader once again.

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A New Democrat government is committed to making Canada a leader on the global eradication of landmines. A New Democrat government would work with other nations, stakeholders, and organizations to determine how Canada can best provide assistance to other nations in order to complete the work of the Ottawa Treaty. We will actively encourage other countries that are not party to the Ottawa Treaty to join, and contribute Canadian resources and technical expertise to international projects that support the objectives of the Treaty.

5. **Canada recently acceded to the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty - the world’s first Treaty to regulate the global arms trade. In light of Canada’s accession to the Treaty, will your government re-examine some of Canada’s existing arms exports, including to Saudi Arabia or other countries of concern?**

6. **Countries with known human rights abuses to have little trouble obtaining weapons. Notwithstanding your party’s position on the Arms Trade Treaty, what steps will your government take to ensure that Canadian weapons do not end up in the hands of those known or suspected to abuse human rights?**

New Democrats are glad Canada has acceded to the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty, but disappointed that it took the Government of Canada until June 2019 to do so. New Democrats have been advocating for Canada to sign and ratify the treaty since it’s inception and are disappointed that Canada could not have shown leadership sooner.

New Democrats know that Canada should pursue peace internationally, and we can have a much greater effort in this pursuit. New Democrats will work hard to ensure that Canadian-made weapons are not fuelling conflict and human-rights abuses abroad.

Canadians deserve to know that Canadian weapons do not end up in the hands of regimes that brutally oppress human rights. New Democrats believe that Canada must follow established policy guidelines that clearly outline the control of exported military goods to countries that have a record of violating human rights. An NDP government will respect those existing policies in their entirety, and ensure that there is proper transparency and public accountability in the annual reports on Canadian weapons exports.

7. **In response to the unacceptable humanitarian harm caused by nuclear weapons and the risks that nuclear weapons continue to pose to humanity, 122 states negotiated the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. Canada was not one of those states. If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, will Canada undertake a study of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?**

8. **For more than six years, there have been a number of humanitarian statements about nuclear weapons with wide support at the United Nations. Canada has not joined any of the main humanitarian statements partially due to objections about the inclusion of the phrase ‘under any
9. *circumstances’ in the sentence, “it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances.” If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, will Canada state clearly that the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances is unacceptable? If not, could you please articulate under what circumstances your party believes the use of nuclear weapons is appropriate?

The NDP has shown consistent leadership on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. In our New Deal for People, New Democrats once again commit nuclear disarmament. A New Democrat government would commit to studying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

New Democrats firmly believe it is in Canada and the world’s interest to never use nuclear weapons. We have repeatedly challenged governments on their failures to recognize the human consequences of nuclear weapons. In government we would firmly state that it is time to pursue a global ban of nuclear weapons and engage in multilateral efforts for nuclear disarmament.

10. *Canada is participating in the multilateral meetings held since 2014 on technical, legal, ethical, and operational concerns relating to “lethal autonomous weapons systems” or “killer robots” but has said little and has yet to issue national policy on the topic. Autonomous weapons systems are not armed drones, but instead they are future weapons that would be able to select and fire upon targets without meaningful human control. As of August 2019, Canada does not have a clear position on autonomous weapons systems but leading Artificial Intelligence experts from across the country have been calling for Canadian leadership to prohibit fully autonomous weapons systems. If your party forms the government after 2019, how will your government respond to the concerns raised, including the call to pre-emptively ban systems that would select and attack targets without meaningful human control?

New Democrats recognize the serious concerns that are raised around the lack of human control in automated weapons systems. Without the presence of human control, there is no chain-of-command and no clear method of determining responsibility in the event of civilian casualties or mistaken targets.

New Democrats believe that Canada can lead by example by outlining a clear position that weapons systems must include human control. Too many nations in the world have no clear policy on automated or robotic weapons systems, but their proliferation in military networks is only increasing. There are legal, practical, and ethical questions surrounding the use of these weapons and their consequences, and Canada must be proactive about these considerations.

11. *Recent research confirms that when heavy explosive weapons (weapons with wide area effects) are used in populated areas the vast majority of casualties are civilians. The Government of Austria is convening a conference to discuss the UN Secretary-General’s proposal to develop a...*
12. political declaration to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas on October 1-2, 2019. Will your party support the Secretary General’s proposal, and review and strengthen domestic policies and practices on the use of explosive weapons?

The use of heavy explosive weapons in populated areas is virtually indiscriminate. Canadians should have faith that the Canadian Armed Forces will exercise diligence in using Canadian weapons so that no civilian deaths are caused.

New Democrats believe every measure should be taken to prevent civilian casualties. We will support the UN Secretary-General’s proposal and undertake a review of domestic policies and practices on the use of explosive weapons, with the goal of strengthening them to prevent civilian casualties.

13. The use of armed drones for extrajudicial killings of suspected terrorist by States in clandestine operations remain largely unchallenged, while these strikes keep killing and wounding civilians without accountability and transparency from those responsible. The growing proliferation of drones, being perceived as an effective cheap and risk-free tool in military operations by states and non-states actors needs to be addressed to prevent those systems ending up in the hands of the wrong actors. If your party forms the next government, what will be the Government of Canada’s policy in regards to the international legal framework, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law, on the use of armed drones in and outside armed conflict and how will your party bolster international efforts to improve regulations of their export?

New Democrats are firm in our belief that any actions by the Canadian military must conform to the laws of armed conflict, the principles of proportionality and be able to distinguish between civilians and members of the military.

Canadians deserve to know that their military and their government are acting in ethical ways. In government, New Democrats would work towards clearer policy as to how Canada uses armed drones inside and outside of conflict.

14. Depleted uranium weapons have come under international scrutiny in recent years due to significant concerns about the long-term health consequences of their use. If your party forms the next government, what will Canada’s policy be on the use of depleted uranium weapons? What will be Canada’s position be regarding providing technical and financial assistance in order to aid decontamination of affected states and reduce the risks to civilians?

New Democrats recognize the very serious concerns from members of the Canadian Forces and others about depleted uranium. As with other weapons, Canada should offer its technical expertise and financial ability in support of decontamination efforts where chemical, biological, or radiological contamination has occurred.
15. **The environmental damage caused by armed conflicts harms civilians, damages ecosystems and impedes sustainable development, problems worsened by permissive laws, low prioritisation and inadequate systems of response. If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, what contribution will Canada make towards international efforts to address the environmental dimensions of armed conflicts?**

New Democrats know that the environmental consequences of conflict are clear, and in the ongoing climate crisis we should do everything in our power to protect and rehabilitate lands and waters affected by conflict.

Environmental rehabilitation should be included in planning for peacebuilding operations, and environmental considerations must be accounted for during conflict.

In government, New Democrats would acknowledge that just as conflict can cause environmental crises, so too can environmental crises cause conflict. We would incorporate this knowledge in government security programming.

16. **There are a number of links between the Women, Peace and Security Agenda based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and humanitarian disarmament. Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security highlights these links in the theory of change document. There is a lot of international evidence that when women are involved in peace processes the rate of success is greatly improved. If your party forms the next government, how will Canada strengthen the links between humanitarian disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda?**

New Democrats are fully committed to implementing Canada’s Action Plan on Women’s Peace and Security. This includes recognizing the needs and capacities of women and girls and incorporating these in Canadian and multilateral responses to conflict; acknowledging rape and other sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war, supporting UN peace operations that address the risk of sexual and gendered violence, and including the perspectives and involvement of all sexes and genders in Canadian and multilateral efforts to address and resolve conflict.