



7 April 2015

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: Canada's Current Military Mission in Iraq and Syria

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

I write to commend to you the attached letter signed by the denominational leaders of members of The Canadian Council of Churches.

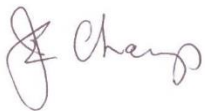
We are troubled by the actions of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria committing atrocities that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. While we applaud the Government of Canada for recognizing the gravity of this situation, we also have serious questions about how Canada is responding.

Our views are informed by deeply rooted beliefs in the sanctity and dignity of human life, the need to protect vulnerable people from atrocities, and cautions about the past ineffectiveness of international military interventions in the region.

We are therefore writing to urge you and the Government of Canada to

- strengthen diplomatic efforts and make them better known so we can discuss these efforts with others in the Middle East;
- increase further humanitarian assistance to the region and provide robust support for refugees, including consulting with the Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association to coordinate the response in Canada;
- support civil society organizations to contribute to peace and social development over the long term;
- reduce the flow of arms to the region; and
- focus on the protection of the rule of law and respect for human rights, especially through inclusive government structures in Iraq and Syria.

Please be assured that churches across Canada continue to hold you and your government in our prayers.



Lt-Colonel Jim Champ
President