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# FALL ADVOCACY PACKAGE

2023



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# IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA

PROPOSED BY CFUW HALIFAX

**RESOLVED,** That CFUW urge the government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments to:

1. Gradually phase out the use of correctional facilities for the purpose of the detention of immigrants taking into consideration public safety and security.

2. End the provincial and territorial contracts with the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) for the purpose of detention of immigrants in correctional facilities.

3. Collaborate among all levels of government to develop, fund, and utilize alternative options of monitoring immigrants that treat them with dignity and respect.

4. Support the passage of Bill C-20, the Public Complaints and Review Commission Act or similar legislation.

## QUICK FACTS

- In the fiscal year 2022-2023, **5,248 foreign nationals and permanent residents were detained** in Immigration Holding Centres or provincial correctional facilities by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).
- Detention can exacerbate existing psychosocial disabilities in detainees and trigger new ones, namely **depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.**



# IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA



## BACKGROUND

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is authorized to detain foreign nationals and permanent residents, if they feel there are reasonable grounds to believe the individual is a flight risk, unable to prove their identity, inadmissible, or a danger to the public ([Who are Immigration Detainees?](#)) In the fiscal year 2022-2023, **5,248 people were detained**, without facing criminal charges ([Annual Detention Statistics, 2012 to 2023, 2023](#)). These detainees are kept in **Immigration Holding Centres and correctional facilities**, which often impose restrictions that deny them of their liberty and dignity.

Many individuals flee war, racial/religious/sexual persecution, or torture to seek a safe haven in Canada, only to experience restrictive conditions like being **handcuffed and placed in solitary confinement** with no outside contact. This policy creates serious consequences for immigrants' mental health. Research by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch found that detention can exacerbate existing psychosocial disabilities in detainees and trigger new ones, namely **depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress** ([I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There, 2021](#)).

The pandemic prompted detention numbers to drop significantly, demonstrating that **alternatives to detention are feasible**. These alternatives include Electronic Monitoring programs, Community Case Management and Supervision programs, and transforming Immigration Holding Centres into welcoming centres with support services and freedom of movement.

To date, seven provinces (British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and New Brunswick) have cancelled their contracts with CBSA to incarcerate immigrants in provincial jails ([Bureau, 2023](#)).

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS

- [The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#) states that “an officer may issue a warrant for the arrest and detention of an immigrant, who the officer has reasonable grounds to believe is inadmissible, and is a danger to the public, or is unlikely to appear for examination, an admissibility hearing, removal from Canada, or at a proceeding that could lead to the making of a removal order by the Minister.”
- Bill C-20 ([An Act establishing the Public Complaints and Review Commission](#)), introduced in May 2022, aims to create an **independent review and complaints body** for the activities of CBSA.

# TAKE ACTION

## IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA

There are lots of actions you can take as an individual or as a local club. Find some ideas here or brainstorm with your club!



### LEARN

Learn more about the immigration detention process with your club or Advocacy Group.



### PROMOTE

Promote and support Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International's [#WelcomeToCanada](#) campaign



### ENGAGE

Engage with local NGOs in supporting immigrants.



### WRITE

Write to your local MP requesting their support in passing Bill C-20 and in ending provincial contracts with CBSA for the purpose of detaining immigrants in correctional facilities.

# TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MATERNAL DEATH PREVENTION STRATEGY

PROPOSED BY CFUW HAMILTON



**RESOLVED**, that CFUW urge the federal government to work with the provinces/territories to establish a similar program to the UK MBRRACE (United Kingdom Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk Through Audits and Confidential Enquiries) model to collect and analyze consistent disaggregated and anonymized data about maternal deaths and close calls, and to share those data in confidential form with relevant groups (e.g. health care providers, policy makers, researchers, advocacy groups, members of the public).

**RESOLVED**, that CFUW urge the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, along with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada and the Canadian Association of Midwives, to work together on a comprehensive maternal death prevention strategy. This strategy would promote awareness and best practices among health care providers around risk factors (e.g., age, ethnicity, race, income, mental health issues, housing, education level, access to medical care), and enhance public education of patient populations.

## QUICK FACTS

- The World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and other organizations estimate Canada's maternal mortality rate to be as much as **60 per cent higher** than what is reported by Statistics Canada.
- Only **six provinces** have mandated maternal death reviews.



# TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MATERNAL DEATH PREVENTION STRATEGY



## BACKGROUND

The definition of maternal deaths used internationally and in Canada is: “the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes” (International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, 2010).

According to Statistics Canada, there were 508 maternal deaths in Canada between 2000 and 2021 (Number of Maternal Deaths and Maternal Mortality Rates, 2023). However, Dr. Jocelynn Cook, the Chief Scientific Officer of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada, says **no one really knows how many mothers die** during pregnancy, or in the months after (Gomez and Carman, 2022).

An international report by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and other organizations estimated Canada's 2017 maternal mortality rate to be as much as **60 per cent higher** than what is reported by Statistics Canada (Trends in Maternal Mortality, 2019). While still low by global standards, this estimate would put Canada at **double the rate** of other high-income countries such as the Netherlands, Ireland, and Japan, and in the top third of countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as of 2017 (Gomez and Carman, 2022).

Only **six provinces have mandated maternal death reviews**: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Quebec. This means that if an individual dies during or within 42 days of a pregnancy in the other seven Canadian provinces or territories, it will not be independently investigated as a maternal death.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS:

- In the U.K., **maternal deaths have been tracked and investigated** by the country's MBRRACE (Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries) monitoring program since 1952. A team of reviewers from a variety of health disciplines looks at the death of women in their childbearing years and studies maternal deaths. Reports of their collected findings, stripped of information that would identify patients, are released to the public.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides funding to states through its ERASE MM (Enhancing Reviews and Surveillance to Eliminate Maternal Mortality) Program. This program facilitates an **understanding of the causes** of maternal mortality and complications of pregnancy to better prevent maternal deaths and **reduce racial disparities**.

# TAKE ACTION

## TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MATERNAL DEATH PREVENTION STRATEGY

Consider these ideas to advocate for greater awareness and prevention of maternal deaths.



### WRITE

Write to local MPs and MLAs/MPPs/MHAs/MNAs advocating for the implementation of a comprehensive federal/provincial/territorial maternal death prevention strategy as part of our national health care programs.



### FEATURE

Feature public speakers in a webinar/Zoom or public lecture on this issue, potentially in partnership with local maternal health care providers.



# ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

PROPOSED BY CFUW INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED**, that CFUW urge the Federal Government to ensure that international trade agreements and related policies are used as tools to maximize efforts to promote and thereby to reaffirm and accelerate achievement of the 2015 United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**RESOLVED**, that CFUW urge the Federal Government to reaffirm its commitment to gender equality by consulting with civil society organizations in developing, monitoring and evaluating the gendered impacts of its international trade agreements.

## QUICK FACTS

- “Trade can **dramatically improve women’s lives**, creating new jobs, enhancing consumer choice, and increasing women’s bargaining power in society. But **women’s relationship with trade is complex**, as it can also lead to job losses and a concentration of work in lower-skilled jobs.”
- **Gender provisions** within trade agreements may include obligations regarding labour conditions and practices, benefits, funding of women entrepreneurs, promotion of under-represented groups in business ownership, and participation in economic development activities.



# ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS



## BACKGROUND

International trade agreements have the potential to act as powerful catalysts in advancing the 17 **UN Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). CFUW focuses its work on several of the SDGs, including ensuring that all girls and women have equal opportunities and equal access to quality education (SDG 4) within a peaceful (SDG 16) and secure environment (SDG 13) where their human rights are respected (SDG 16). We advocate for a world where poverty is reduced (SDG 1), discrimination eliminated, and there are equal opportunities for leadership, employment, income, education, and careers and the ability to maximize potential (SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 10).

The rules within international trade agreements are central factors in the setting of prices, tariffs, and quotas, as well as in import and export activity, determination of commodity production, price of agricultural products, and employment levels—all of which can have a **net positive or negative impact on women** ([Women's Issues & Trade Agreements](#)).

The World Bank and World Trade Organization describe the relationship between trade and the status of women as follows: "Trade can dramatically improve women's lives, creating **new jobs**, enhancing **consumer choice**, and increasing women's **bargaining power** in society. But women's relationship with trade is complex, as it can also lead to **job losses** and a concentration of work in **lower-skilled jobs**" ([Women and Trade: The Role of Trade in Promoting Women's Equality, 2020](#)).

**Gender provisions** within trade agreements may include obligations regarding labour conditions, benefits such as parental leave, non-discriminatory labour practices, funding of women entrepreneurs, equal pay for equal work of equal value, promotion of under-represented groups in ownership of small and medium size enterprises, and participation of women in economic development activities ([Database on Gender Provisions in Regional Trade Agreements](#)).

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS:

- Canada has **15 free trade agreements** with 51 different countries ([Canada's Free Trade Agreements, 2022](#)).
- Global Affairs describes Canada's approach to trade and gender as "consistent with the Government of Canada's broader commitment to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment and complements its efforts to advance gender equality both at home and abroad" ([Trade and Gender Connection, 2019](#)).



# TAKE ACTION

## ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

Here are some ideas for ways to get involved.

### MONITOR

Monitor data regarding the impact of international trade agreements on women and children and promote public dialogue regarding the impact of these agreements.

### EDUCATE

Educate members about the importance of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



### EXPLORE

Explore Canadian international trade agreements and related policies (e.g., the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement).



### JOIN IN

Join coalitions to advocate for international trade agreements that include specific gender equality and empowerment targets and support the SDGs both domestically and internationally.



# ADVOCACY TIPS AND LINKS

## 01

You can view all Adopted Resolutions in the [CFUW Adopted Resolutions Book](#). If you are using the CFUW name in any advocacy action, please review the [Advocacy Guidelines](#) and [Who Does What?](#) documents, available on the CFUW Member Website. If you have any questions, contact the National Advocacy and Policy Specialist at [advocacy@cfuw-fcfdu.ca](mailto:advocacy@cfuw-fcfdu.ca).

## 02

Attend the Advocacy Toolbox Workshop on Thursday October 12 at 7:00pm EST, or watch (the future) recording! [Register for the Workshop here](#).

## 03

[Sign up for the CFUW Club Action Newsletter](#) if you haven't already. It is a great way to find out what other clubs are up to, engage with CFUW events and members across the country, and get inspiration for your own advocacy work.

## 04 Use a CFUW Template Letter!

Template letters are attached in Microsoft Word documents and on the CFUW Member Website. Save the document to your computer and change any of the text in red to suit your CFUW club and local representative. Letters have a big impact, but if you are short on time, emails work too. Ensure that who you are writing to can influence your chosen topic.



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The City of Ottawa is located on the unceded and traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.



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