

PEACE TRAIN CANADA'S CALL FOR A NATIONAL PEACE CENTRE

April 14, 2026

Train is a verb. If you want peace, train for peace.

If we want peace, we must prepare and train for peace on a daily basis and transmit that power to citizens and every organ of society.

Our capacity to cultivate peace in the face of conflict requires training in the most beneficial disciplines of discernment, patience, non-aggression, open inquiry, emotional intelligence, active listening, careful dialogue, diplomacy, and creative approaches to problem solving.

Peace Train Canada is committed to helping our country assume the full measure of its diplomatic power in the service of enduring stability, security and human rights both here and abroad. To that end:

Peace Train Canada is calling on our government to establish and fund an independent, integrated Canadian Centre for Peace and Justice focused on research, education, policy, and training in conflict resolution, diplomacy, and peace operations for Canadian civilians, police, military personnel, and the international community as a fundamental part of Canada's increasing commitment to defence and security.

NEED FOR A NATIONAL PEACE CENTRE

A National Peace Centre is Needed to Embody Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, including to:

- Harmonize the actions of individuals, institutions, and the government to attain the common end of a thriving, just, and peaceful society.
- Strengthen universal peace and develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.
- Achieve co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character and in promoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Maintain national and international peace and security by preventing, removing and/or suppressing threats to and breaches of peace at home and abroad.

A National Peace Centre is Needed To Serve as a Hub to:

- Coordinate information, initiatives, activities, training, and events from across the organizational peace spectrum in Canada.
- Assist government in fulfilling peace keeping and foreign policy commitments

- Develop the confidence and stability of a peace-loving society by training in and transmitting learned behaviors (i.e. patience, active listening, empathy, diplomacy, applied ethical values, and conflict resolution) to multiple sectors of society.
- Build a comprehensive capacity to respond to rather than react to domestic and international challenges.
- Assist in identifying and addressing the underlying causes, perpetrators, and profiteers of conflict, thereby helping to transform reactionary aggression into a manageable situation and a reconciled path forward.

TWO MODEL PEACE CENTRES

We have an honourable history of peace efforts in Canada, including the operation of two national peace centres: the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS) and the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC). Although government dismantled both, they remain exemplary models for two different types of peace centre.

The Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS)

In 1985, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau established the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security as a Crown corporation to increase the knowledge and understanding of international peace and security issues from a Canadian perspective.

Key aspects of the CIIPS mandate related to matters of peace and security included:

- Fostering, funding, and conducting research;
- Studying and proposing ideas and policies;
- Collecting and disseminating information;
- Encouraging and promoting public discussion; and
- Engaging with the public, academics, the government, and international partners.

CIIPS was equipped to assist Boards of Education and Provincial Ministries in meeting the challenge of how best to teach controversial issues such as the arms race and the Cold War to young people *who will carry the burden of finding fresh ideas and approaches to peace and security.*

In this context, CIIPS Executive Director, Geoffrey Pearson, articulates aspirations that echo those of PTC:

We cannot expect young people to grasp fully the complexities of today's world. But we can pose these problems in such a way that they are equipped with the ability to analyze critically, to appreciate divergent views and assumptions, and to apply sound judgment as well as much needed imagination to the challenges they will face as adults and, indeed, as future leaders.

After eight years, CIIPS was closed in March, 1993.

The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC)

In 1994, the Lester B Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre (commonly referred to as the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre or the Pearson Centre) was established by the Government of Canada as an *independent, not-for-profit organization* with a mandate to support Canada's contribution to international peace and security.

It conducted education, training and research on all aspects of peace operations throughout the world. It also raised revenue through its specialized training and management courses, which it ran for individuals, governments and organizations around the world. And, for over fifteen years, the PPC compiled Canadian peacekeeping press publications called The Pearson Papers.

The PPC was named in honour of Lester Pearson who received the Nobel Prize for his work in helping to create the first United Nations peacekeeping force. Canadians came to identify the nation's peacekeeping role as the country's top contribution in international affairs.

As the federal government stepped back from the art of conflict resolution into an ever more militarized approach to security, it gradually withdrew financial support for the PPC until it closed in 2011.

The importance of the PPC and Canada's peace building potential as an independent middle power has become more and more evident over the ensuing years. Many organizations have been calling for a reinstatement of the PPC.

In 2019, a key recommendation of the Standing Committee on National Defense Report called "Canada's Role in International Peace Operations and Conflict Resolution," was to re-establish the PPC with a mandate including, but not limited to, conflict research, conflict prevention and mediation, civilian protection, and a delivery model emphasizing capacity building and training the trainers. Unfortunately, the report was tabled with no response as the government dissolved to call an election.

The Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association also advocates for the re-establishment of the PPC.

A FADING GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau directed the establishment of a Canadian Centre for Peace, Order and Good Government (CCPOGG) to Cabinet ministers in 2019 and 2021 to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law globally.

In the June 2025 response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to PTC's petition calling for a National Centre for Peace and Justice, CCPOGG was cited as "still under consideration by the Government." Unfortunately, what the government has articulated with regard to CCPOGG, does not address the substance or scope of PTC's request.

Of particular concern is the historical linkages associated with the name chosen for this centre. In many Commonwealth jurisdictions, the phrase "peace, order, and good government" (POGG) is

used in law to express the legitimate objects of legislative powers conferred by statute. The phrase appears in many Imperial Acts of Parliament and Letters Patent, most notably our own constitution and that of Barbados, several of the British Overseas Territories, Australia and, formerly, New Zealand and South Africa.

A similar phrase, "peace, welfare, and good government" was used in the Act of Union 1840 that created the Province of Canada.

Section 91 of the 1867 British North America Act (now known as the Constitution Act) grants federal parliament powers to legislate for the "peace, order, and good government", a concept rooted in British tradition that emphasizes public order, stability, and rule of law. In legal contexts, "breaches of the peace" refer to actions that disturb public tranquility or cause fear of violence.

PTC fully supports our government and the desire for peace and *good* government. However, the historic, colonial, and legalistic focus of power inherent in POGG narrows the view of peace compared to the multi-faceted dynamics of 'positive peace' at the core of PTC's request for a national peace centre.

CONCLUSION

In order to sustain the well-being and prosperity inherent in a culture of peace, it is imperative for Canada to establish a national centre to promote peace at home and abroad. Maintaining a culture of peace requires government commitment to an integrated, whole-of-society approach to peace making.

A Canadian Centre for Peace and Justice would be an operational asset for the government, the military, and civil society. It would help coordinate and integrate peace and security related intelligence, training, education, and analysis while enhancing institutional transparency and accountability.

A strong defense strategy need not preclude a strong peace strategy. Indeed, the best foreign policy for long-term security includes the two solid pillars of a sound defense and a sophisticated, peace making, building, and keeping capacity. This combined strategy requires a multilateral, proactive approach that prioritizes diplomatic mediation, specialized military training, humanitarian intervention, and investment not only in the UN and NATO but in Canada's extensive institutional and community-based peace building network.

Peace Train Canada joins in solidarity with many other organizations calling on our government to demonstrate a national commitment to work for peace and security by establishing a dedicated centre of peace.

As Canada has committed 5% of its GDP to defense expenditures, PTC is asking it to commit at least .1% of that to establish a peace centre working in the service and security of its population.

Canadians deserve, and would fully support, this modest start to such a critical service.