

## **Gun Control**

A letter was sent out to MPs in April, signed by the President of UWCNY, in support of reducing violence in Canada by guns. The letter also asked for support for Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns (CDPG). The organization's asks of government have been simple: reduce the proliferation of guns in our society, educate Canadians about the risks of guns in our homes and communities, and invest in the social determinants of gun violence.

CFUW with CDPG calls on Parliament to take the following specific actions as part of a comprehensive plan to reduce gun violence:

- Act to ban semi-automatic weapons from our country. Parliament must move immediately to enact a federal ban on the sale of weapons that can cause so much human carnage so quickly. Which weapons are banned must be clear, comprehensive, and err on the side of public safety. A reasonable buyback program and stricter storage rules should follow.
- Implement a "red flag law" and other measures to lower the risk of suicide and femicide by preventing or withdrawing access to guns for people who pose a risk to themselves or others. Such measures should be combined with strengthening mental health supports.
- Implement harm reductions strategies including warnings on all advertising and at the point of sale of guns to inform Canadians of the increased risks of femicide, suicide, and unintentional shootings of children posed by having a gun in the home.

CFUW and Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns are also supportive of measures to stop the flow of illegal guns at the Canada-US border, encourage international efforts to reduce the proliferation of guns, and follow evidence-based measures on criminal justice policy.

In May, CDPG emailed us urging us to keep up our advocacy efforts for gun control. The announcement of an assault weapons ban on May 8th was an enormous accomplishment and one we should all celebrate. However, we have to reinforce the evidence, urgency, and respect for the common good that underscores this policy. This was critical to 1) maintaining public support and political interest and 2) furthering other important advocacy goals. In brief, we cannot let any narrative that distracts from the positive benefits of a ban on these weapons take hold. We also need to make it appear, now and well into the future, that it is unthinkable that this policy would be overturned by any future government. In the Fall, we hope to join CDPG (Canadian Doctors for Protection from guns) in a Day of Virtual Action to continue lobbying for gun control.

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**The speaker at UWCNY's January 2020 meeting was Dr. Najma Ahmed, a Surgeon at St. Michael's Hospital, and a founder, last year, of Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns.**

From the CDPG website

Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns marked one year since launch with release of *CDPG 1 Year Later: New Stories from the Frontlines and a Cri de Coeur for Change*

### About Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns

Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns (CDPG) is a non-profit organization concerned about the increasing public health impact of firearms. We represent physicians working in collaboration with nurses, paramedics, rehabilitation specialists, psychologists, researchers and other frontline health care professionals. We have all witnessed first-hand the emotional and physical trauma and devastation caused by guns. CDPG calls for a comprehensive public policy response to this crisis in our communities, including preventative tools to reduce gun use and their consequences on youth violence, domestic abuse, and suicide.

Update on CDPG

From a media release

On February 7, 2020, Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns (CDPG) marked one year since its launch with an event to release a new booklet of reflections by physicians and other health professionals on treating victims of guns.

*CDPG 1 Year Later: New Stories from the Frontlines and a Cri de Coeur for Change* contains more than 25 first-person accounts from across the country highlighting the numerous tragic consequences of gunshot wounds on victims and their families. Stories of gun homicide, suicide, femicide, accidental shootings of children, rehabilitation and treatment of gun injury, and psychological trauma on victims, survivors, families, health workers, and communities are told with searing reality and an urgent call for change. Every story is a cautionary tale of the risks posed by the proliferation of guns in our communities.

The event also included the release of an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair proposing an agenda for action.

**UWCNY Advocacy Convenor, Shirin Hira, wrote a note of congratulations on CDPG's first anniversary. In response, Christopher Holcroft, spokesperson for CDPG, told her, "We have a lot more to do but the momentum is positive. We are going to be in touch with supporters soon about some specific potential outreach initiatives to MPs, and news on the national day of action."**

From CFUW Club Action Newsletter December 20, 2019

## **Gun Control Letter in the Globe and Mail**

Margaret McGovern, member of the University Women's Club of North York is a passionate gun control advocate and had her letter to the Editor at the Globe and Mail published on December 9, 2019. Thank you to CFUW members who have shown leadership in advocacy over the past year!

Re [Why The Rifle Used In Montreal's École Polytechnique Shooting Remains Legal, 30 Years Later](#) (Dec. 6):

A gun that can kill 14 women and injure 10 others should not be needed for groundhogs or other small animals. I am appalled that a lawyer would dismiss its danger to women.

Our newly elected federal government has promised to address assault weapons and handguns. Let us get on with it.

I would suggest that we honour the young women who died at École Polytechnique by letting the government know that we support their efforts to rid our communities of these lethal weapons.

Margaret McGovern Toronto