

Bringing faithful justice to the grill

Talking to your MP this summer BBQ season

The summer is a great time to connect with and build a relationship with [your MP](#).

We have created some short BBQ pitches on topics that we know are of interest to you as advocates. Make the most of the opportunity of your MP being home from Parliament until mid-September. Use and adapt these words as you see fit. Please send us relevant updates, suggestions, or questions to takeaction@united-church.ca and to help us keep the conversation going at [United Action for Justice](#) on Facebook, [X](#) (formerly known as [Twitter](#)), and [Instagram](#).

This is an opportunity

- for you and your MP to get to know each other on a personal level, acknowledging their humanity and learning what is important to them
- to bring important issues and asks to your MP's attention
- to get commitments from your MP
- to gather information about what questions your MP has about an issue

Most MPs have a community BBQ open to everyone sometime in the summer—you can Google it, call their constituency office, or look on their social media page. You can also organize a meet-and-greet to invite your MP to attend.

As people of faith, we are called into bold discipleship that leads to daring justice! Much public witness draws on the biblical prophetic tradition of speaking truth about the state of society/world, and calling for change and transformation to promote life, justice, and peace. Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Jesus are examples for us. Speak up about justice in small doses and plant seeds for future change! For more tools for faithful justice action, check the [Faith and Politics](#) webpage on united-church.ca.

NOTE: We aren't covering every topic or all the important questions. We will keep adding to this resource over the coming weeks and months. Some advocacy groups have their own summer BBQ guide, so check out other organizations you support.

Jump to the issue(s) you're most concerned about

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2SLGBTQIA+ Justice

Question/Ask

Around the world, discriminatory laws put at risk the human rights of people who are 2SLGBTQIA+. As my MP, will you support our three asks to help ensure safety, dignity, and respect for the human rights of all?

- **Appoint a Special Envoy** for LGBTQIA+ human rights to coordinate international efforts with other countries standing up for LGBTQIA+ rights worldwide, and **use all diplomatic channels available to secure the repeal of draconian anti-LGBTQIA+ laws** worldwide, including in Canadian provinces.
- **Improve pathways** to Canada for LGBTQIA+ activists and community members who may need to flee their countries for safety.
- **Increase Canadian international assistance** to organizations committed to inclusion and supporting LGBTQIA+ human rights, and make it a long-term funding commitment.

If yes, when will you let me know what you've done and what answer you've received?
If not, why not?

Issue

As people of faith, we are called to challenge injustice and oppression so everyone can live life abundantly. The United Church of Canada opposes discrimination against anyone, for any reason, including actions that result in someone's worth being devalued. The work of justice is about how we treat people in the world, so we work to end all forms of discrimination. The United Church of Canada affirms that all persons are made in the image of God. The United Church denounces the amendments to policies and legislation across provinces in Canada that roll back safety and legal protections for 2SLGBTQIA+ people, particularly transgender and non-binary youth. We also raise the alarm about anti-LGBTQIA+ bills that have passed around the world, notably in Uganda and Ghana, putting peoples' lives in danger. Ask your MP: How is Canada supporting LGBTQIA+ human rights in places such as Uganda?

We invite tangible actions from the people of the United Church and all people of goodwill to be in solidarity with 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples in response to these proposed policy changes and draconian laws.

Polarization and attempts to roll back rights and protections of 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples should be met with concerted resistance by all.

More information

- The United Church of Canada: [Call to Act: Join in Solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community](#)

- Dignity Network Canada: [2023 Briefing Report: A Canadian Special Envoy on International LGBTIQ+ Human Rights](#) and [March 23: Call to Support Uganda's LGBTIQ Communities](#).
 - The United Church is a member of the board of Dignity Network Canada.
- [Affirm United](#)

Cuban Economic Crisis

Question/Ask

Cuba is facing an extreme economic crisis. As my MP, will you help bring attention and aid to the Cuban people's plight?

Will you ask the Minister of International Development and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to:

1. increase Canadian humanitarian aid to Cuba?
2. speak with the US about how its policies* towards Cuba harm the Cuban people and affect Canadians' ability to deliver aid?

**Sanctions; erroneous listing on the US List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.*

If yes, when will you let me know what you've done and what answer you've received?
If not, why not?

Issue

The United Church of Canada has fostered close relationships with Cuban partners for over four decades. The Cuban people are facing the worst economic crisis in the country's history: increased hunger, severe child food insecurity, increased child mortality, prolonged power outages, and lack of cash and medicines.

Jesus cared for the children around him, and our faith calls us to do the same. Today, 9% of Cuban children experience **severe** food poverty, and 33% experience moderate food poverty. This is in sharp contrast to Cuba's previous position as the only country in Latin America to *eliminate* child malnutrition (UNICEF, 2009). The extreme economic crisis in Cuba is caused by three factors:

1. the effects of US policy (sanctions and listing)
2. the impact of COVID (drop in remittances and tourism dollars)
3. the impact of droughts, tornadoes, and other effects of climate change

The solution requires both humanitarian aid and an end to US policies that create these harms. Canada has a long history of connection with the Cuban people. We have heard from MPs that they are not hearing about the current extreme economic crisis in Cuba, and that many MPs aren't aware of how US policies are affecting Canadians' ability to respond to the situation.

More information

- [Letter](#) from 35 Canadian churches and civil society calls government ministers to action.
- The article "[Crisis in Cuba: a role for Canada?](#)" outlines how Canada should play a greater role in responding to the crisis in Cuba.

Migrant Justice

Question/Ask

The Government of Canada promised permanent resident status for undocumented workers in Canada but have yet to deliver. As my MP, will you tell the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada that you support the promised comprehensive program to “regularize” undocumented people and ask for its immediate implementation?

*Please also **thank** your MP for the recent improvement to the [status of care workers!](#)

Issue

The United Church of Canada’s congregations include both newcomers to Canada and thousands of people who welcome newcomers through formal refugee sponsorship, as well as formal and informal supports to migrants. We believe that we are called to show radical hospitality to our neighbours near and far.

We believe in the dignity of every person, and a vision of an equitable and just country and world. We support regularizing undocumented migrants, people who contribute greatly to the flourishing of our country. For years, The United Church of Canada, with the Migrant Rights Network, has been advocating for status for all.

Undocumented migrants are integral to our communities, yet they face exploitation and exclusion. Regularization will empower undocumented people to assert their rights at work; to protect themselves from abuse, and to access healthcare and essential services while growing the economy, which in turn funds public services. Regularization will change lives for generations to come.

In December 2021, PM Trudeau made a [mandate letter](#) commitment asking the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to create a “regularization program” for undocumented migrants. That promise has been repeated many times, and the Minister [promised to bring a proposal to Cabinet](#) in the spring of 2024. Recently, the Minister has [indicated that there is no consensus](#).

A comprehensive and inclusive [regularization program](#) that allows all undocumented people to apply for permanent resident status immediately should be implemented. It should include no caps, no restrictions by industry of work or geography, and no two-step immigration, which only gives temporary work permits. We welcome the recent announcement of such a program for care workers.

More information

- The United Church of Canada, [“Ecumenical Partners Call for Justice for Migrant Workers”](#)

- Migrant Rights Network [Take Action](#) and [briefing](#) on regularization

Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

Question/Ask

Canada needs a binding two-way arms embargo to ensure it is not in any way complicit in international crimes in Gaza. As my MP, will you join people of conscience throughout your riding and sign onto the [Arms Embargo Now statement](#)?

If yes, will you help get other members of your caucus to sign, too?

If not, why not?

Issue

People in Gaza are experiencing utter destruction, loss of lives, and inhumane conditions without access to necessities for life. Famine is imminent. Children are particularly impacted. Our faith and our humanity call us to act now to ensure an end to the injustice.

Unfortunately, despite passing a non-binding parliamentary motion on March 18, 2024, **Canada has NOT YET imposed an arms embargo on Israel!**

1. **A loophole means that arms exports can continue. Previously authorized permits—i.e., any [permits issued before 2024](#)—remain valid.** This is no small number: [Permits worth \\$30 million](#) were granted in 2023, much of that in the October–December period.
2. Canada’s parliamentary motion **does not apply to arms and component parts that first go to another country.** So Canadian exports to the United States, which is Israel’s largest arms supplier and one of Canada’s largest trading partners, aren’t touched by the motion.
3. An arms embargo is a **two-way ban**: on **both exports and imports** from the named country (according to [Global Affairs Canada](#)). Canada’s parliamentary motion does not prevent Canada from continuing to purchase military equipment from Israel.
4. Canada’s **motion is non-binding.** The Canadian government could start issuing permits again anytime, without needing to seek permission from Parliament or even needing to let the public know.

A binding, two-way arms embargo could be put into place immediately—it doesn’t require Canada to pass a new law or for anything to go before the House of Commons; it is fully within the government’s reach during the summer break!

More information and additional asks

- As people of faith, we bring the grief, compassion, and concerns of a hurting world to God. It will take all of our efforts to get the Government of Canada to do everything in its power to help bring an end to the conflict and to not be complicit in genocide and famine. An arms embargo is just one of the measures needed to secure lasting peace in

the region. Join us at The United Church of Canada's [Support Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel](#) Take Action page to [send a letter to your MP](#).

- An essential part of our witness is to amplify the voices of global partners and vulnerable and marginalized people, as you'll see from this [letter](#) written by Kairos Palestine.
- Read more:
 - The United Church of Canada is part of the [ArmsEmbargoNow Campaign](#). The campaign site has helpful resources and additional ways to take action.
 - [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: Canadian Churches for Just Peace](#)
 - UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese's findings of genocide and state obligation to impose an arms embargo ([testimony to UNHRC](#); written [report](#))
 - Project Ploughshares' [Jan. 2024 report, *Fanning the Flames*](#), noting "substantial risk" that Canadian military goods could contribute to abuses in Gaza. And the Project Ploughshares analysis of the [arms ban motion](#).
 - Canadian [lawyers sue Government of Canada](#) for illegal arms exports to Israel.

Guaranteed Livable Income

Question/Ask

Poverty can happen very quickly to anyone. A guaranteed livable income would help address the persistent inequities in our country. As my MP, will you vote in support of Bill C-233 when it goes to second reading?

If yes, will you help get other members of your caucus to vote in support, too?

If not, why not?

Issue

A guaranteed livable income (GLI) is a payment to individuals or families by government that covers the cost of basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing, transportation, and community participation); it is not conditional on meeting employment criteria or being able to fulfill bureaucratically driven applications to prove they are “really poor” in order to qualify for the benefit. It ensures everyone an income adequate for meeting basic needs, allowing everyone to live with dignity regardless of work status. All Canadian citizens would be ensured an automatic top-up when their income collapses for whatever reason. Such a program would be part of the national fabric of services that preserve and protect Canadians, or, as Jesus put it, “to love our neighbours as ourselves.”

Since 1972, The United Church of Canada has advocated a policy of guaranteed annual income that is more equitable, and less expensive and complicated, to administer than the numerous government support programs currently available. Since then, national and international studies and programs have shown that a universal basic income is affordable and has beneficial effects in the areas of health, justice, education, and social welfare. It is encouraging that bills to create a guaranteed livable basic income are advancing through BOTH the Senate and the House of Commons. If passed, such a law would require the Minister of Finance, within one year, to create a **Canada-wide framework for the implementation of a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income.**

Simply put, this means that the federal government would need to develop the standards and plan from which it, along with the other levels of government, could create guaranteed livable basic incomes in its jurisdictions.

More information

- See The United Church of Canada [Guaranteed Livable Income page](#).

Additional Justice Issues to Follow

- Indigenous justice
- Food security
- Climate justice
- Racial equity
- Just peace in the Philippines