



THE STATE OF INEQUALITY

IS CANADA BRIDGING
OR WIDENING THE GAP?

OXFAM CANADA'S
**INEQUALITY
SCORECARD**

2025



OXFAM
Canada

The State of Inequality: Is Canada bridging or widening the gap?

Oxfam Canada's Inequality Scorecard 2025

October 2025

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Oxfam is a global movement of people working to end injustice and poverty. Our mission is to build lasting solutions to poverty and injustice while improving the lives and promoting the rights of women and girls.

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our office is located on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin First Nation. We recognize the longstanding relationship the Algonquin have with this territory that has been nurtured since time immemorial.

We also pay respect to all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit on the lands that we now know as Canada. We acknowledge the historical and ongoing oppression and colonization of the people and the loss of culture and land.

We recognize the valuable past, present, and future contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as customary keepers and defenders of this territory. We honour their culture, knowledge, leadership, and courage. As settlers, we recognize this first step in a long journey toward decolonization and move towards reconciliation.

We thank members of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation for their support in reviewing this text.

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INTRODUCTION TO INEQUALITY SCORECARD 2025

Across the world, inequality – the state of not being equal, especially in wealth, status, rights, and opportunities – is rising. While over the last decades significant attention has been paid to inequality *between* countries, today inequality is largely rising *within* countries, and Canada is no exception.

Inequality slows development, stunts economic growth, stifles productivity, and harms wellbeing. A more unequal society ultimately threatens security by breeding poverty, crime, and instability.

In discussions of inequality, we typically think of income and wealth inequality – the differences that exist in how much people earn, and how much people own. While these are critical to understanding differences across society, inequality exists across a variety of dimensions, including in both *opportunities* available and how *outcomes* differ across groups and identities like race, religion, and sexual and gender identities.

Just as inequality exists across a range of dimensions, a wide variety of factors drive inequality.

What’s driving the rise in inequality in Canada today? It’s wealth concentrating in the hands of fewer and fewer people. It’s the continued reinforcement of monopolies in essential sectors like groceries, and the financialization of housing – that is when housing is treated as a financial asset for profit instead of a social good. It’s government policy that fails to effectively tax the big polluters who are simultaneously reaping record profits and wrecking the planet. It’s Canada’s continued legacy of colonialism. It’s policies that exploit migrants while failing to offer pathways to citizenship. It’s Canada’s hesitancy to invest in the care economy, and it’s the disparities in access to healthcare that exist across the country.

Inequalities are not inevitabilities – they are policy choices. So, while inequality might be a challenge today, with the right approaches to policy we can chart a new, more equal course for Canada.

Our Inequality Scorecard explores different facets of inequality in Canada today, assesses the measures the federal government has advanced, and proposes bold policy solutions to ensure that inequality is being effectively tackled. Drawing on national and global datasets, alongside lived experiences and expert voices, our scorecard highlights who benefits, who is left behind and where Canada stands on tackling inequality at home and abroad.

The eight realms of policy where inequality is explored here are:



POVERTY, AFFORDABILITY
AND BASIC NEEDS



TAX JUSTICE AND WEALTH
REDISTRIBUTION



CANADA’S CARE ECONOMY



BODILY AUTONOMY
AND HEALTH EQUITY



CLIMATE ACTION



HATE, MARGINALIZATION, AND
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS



INDIGENOUS JUSTICE



GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Each area is rated using a traffic light system: green (progress), yellow (needs improvement) and red (failing). The scorecard highlights federal policies and commitments that are intended to reduce inequality, followed by our own bold policy recommendations. This tool does not offer an exhaustive analysis but aims to paint a picture of government progress at a high level.

RED – FAILING

YELLOW – NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

GREEN – PROGRESS

SUMMARY

The cost-of-living: Poverty, affordability, and basic needs



Increases to the cost of living don't affect all Canadians equally – the most vulnerable are the most impacted. Today, the cost of daily essentials like housing and food continue to skyrocket, while large corporations monopolize entire sectors in our economy, reaping record profits at the expense of everyday Canadians.

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Redistributing power: Wealth inequality and tax justice



Fairly taxing the wealthiest Canadians and corporations is essential to effectively funding our public services, ensuring more equal distributions of wealth, and ultimately to reducing inequality.

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Building an equitable care economy



With half of Canadians expected to give or receive care in their lifetimes, Canada's fragmented and under-resourced care systems put both caregivers and care recipients at risk; deepening gender, racial, and economic inequality.

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Bodily autonomy and health equity



When people are denied contraception, abortion, safe births, shelter from violence, or accurate sexual and reproductive health information, the result is systemic inequality that robs people of their rights, health, safety, and dignity.

Climate inequality: Putting people and the planet first, not polluters



The climate crisis is accelerating and so are the impacts on inequality. Vulnerable communities are both experiencing the impacts of climate change and shouldering the costs. This while those responsible for climate chaos – ultra-rich corporations producing fossil fuels and other polluters – continue to reap record profits.

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Hate, marginalization, and fundamental rights



Incidences of hate-motivated attacks and hate crimes are rising in Canada. Globally, human rights are under attack with the rise of authoritarianism and crackdowns on civil society.

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Indigenous justice



Canada's ongoing colonial systems continue to deny First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples access to land, justice and sovereignty. Policy and investments related to reconciliation should go beyond symbolism to equitably redistribute resources, fulfill land and title rights, and guarantee access to quality services and infrastructure.

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Global leadership



Armed conflicts, climate disasters and economic disruptions are pushing millions into poverty and displacement, while undermining global efforts to address inequality. Canada has a role to play in making the world more equal.

THE COST-OF-LIVING: POVERTY, AFFORDABILITY, AND BASIC NEEDS



SCORE: **RED** – FAILING

Increases to the cost of living don't affect all Canadians equally – the most vulnerable are the most impacted. Today, the cost of daily essentials like housing and food continue to skyrocket, while large corporations monopolize entire sectors in our economy, reaping record profits at the expense of everyday Canadians.

The cost of living in Canada has risen drastically over the past four years. At its height, Canada's headline inflation rose more than **17 percent** between 2021 and 2024. While overall inflation is stabilizing, the price of essential goods continues to rise, putting pressure on Canadians. In 2024, **nearly half of all Canadians** reported that rising prices are greatly affecting their ability to meet day-to-day needs.

At the grocery store, essential items like eggs, baby formula, canned tuna, and coffee were **between 7 and 34 percent higher** this past June than the year before. Rents across Canada are **more than 5 percent higher** this year than last. A recent report found that half of young renters and nearly a third of all tenants are spending more than 50 percent of their income in rent. In 93 per cent of neighborhoods, a full-time minimum wage worker **cannot afford a one-bedroom apartment**.

The rise in prices does not affect all Canadians the same – in fact, it's those who have the least who are impacted the most. While the cost-of-living crisis deepens, the poverty rate in Canada is **on the rise**. Food bank **usage** is exploding and Canada's already underperforming patchwork of social benefits is threatened by **the government's forthcoming 15 percent cut to government spending**.

Canada's employment insurance system is also lagging developments in technology. In 2022, **871,000 workers** in Canada had gig work – working for the likes of Uber or Skip the Dishes – as their main source of income. In addition to being low paid, these jobs don't fit into the Employment Insurance model, making it hard for these workers to access benefits. Now, as AI adoption soars, the labour market will experience more technological turbulence. As it does, the federal government needs to be prepared to aid more people in accessing benefits and continuing education and retraining opportunities.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

FOOD PRICE STABILITY: In 2023, to address the cost of groceries, the federal government passed legislation to establish a one-time **"grocery rebate"** and deliver **enhanced powers to Canada's Competition Commissioner** to enforce competitiveness in the grocery sector. How effective have these actions been? The proof is in the pudding – or rather, tuna, beef, milk,

eggs – which are all more expensive this year than last. Pressure at the grocery store is not diminishing.

HOUSING: Over the last several years, the federal government has committed billions to housing through an array of programs, including the newly launched [Build Canada Homes](#). In 2019, the federal government passed legislation to [recognize the human right to adequate housing](#) and committed to embedding a human rights-based approach in housing policy and programs – meaning that those most in need would be prioritized along with a plan to end homelessness. [Despite billions of public money spent](#), few of the units funded by the federal government are genuinely affordable. Similarly, though a commitment to a [Blueprint for a Renter’s Bill of Rights](#) was made in 2024, it remains unclear how the federal government will hold provinces and territories accountable to protecting renters from unfair rent increases, evictions, and exploitative practices by financialized landlords.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS: The government has long made commitments to modernize Employment Insurance (E.I.). Recently, the federal government undertook an in-depth review of E.I., but no changes were advanced. E.I. was broadened to include more people during the pandemic, but those beneficial changes were allowed to expire. The 2025 Liberal election platform committed to reforming E.I. so that it is more responsive to the modern workforce. While the government has advanced [smaller measures](#) related to industries most impacted by tariffs, broader modernization that would ensure greater access and adequate levels of benefits has yet to materialize.

OXFAM CANADA’S RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENT A PRICE CAP ON ESSENTIAL

GROCERY ITEMS: As grocery inflation soars, the government should implement a price ceiling on a group of essential grocery items to ensure access to an “inflation proof” basket of goods.

MAKE RENTAL HOUSING AFFORDABLE: As rents rise across Canada, and as home ownership remains out of reach for many, the federal government should focus efforts on protecting affordability in the rental market. It should hold provinces and territories accountable

to the *Renters’ Bill of Rights*, fund community housing (public housing, cooperative housing, community land trusts, supportive housing, and non-profit housing) and keep rentals out of the hands of corporate landlords and private equity firms. Build Canada Homes could be a promising start as long as community housing providers are in lead roles for projects – and if Build Canada Homes embeds a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” mandate, with a 20 percent Indigenous-led target. The government should also earmark at least 40 percent of federally funded homes to women and gender-diverse households and dedicate \$50M annually to the Indigenous-led Gendered Homelessness stream.

SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: Increase the individual maximum of the Canada Disability Benefit and expand eligibility beyond the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) so that when combined with other federal, provincial, or territorial programs, no person with a disability lives on less than \$2,400 per month.



PROVIDE MORE ROBUST INCOME SUPPORT THROUGH BENEFITS: Income security can be quickly addressed by raising the income floors in key benefits like the Canada Child Benefit, Canada Worker's Benefit, Guaranteed Income Supplement and the GST credit. The floor can be coordinated across all benefits

to ensure that a minimum income threshold for individuals is being met that ensures they remain above the poverty line.



REDISTRIBUTING POWER: WEALTH INEQUALITY AND TAX JUSTICE

SCORE: **RED** – FAILING

Fairly taxing the wealthiest Canadians and corporations is essential to effectively funding our public services, ensuring more equal distributions of wealth, and ultimately to reducing inequality.

Wealth inequality is at an all-time high and continues to accelerate. The richest 1 percent in Canada hold nearly **\$1.25 trillion** in wealth – almost as much as the bottom 80 percent combined. In 2024, the combined wealth of Canada’s 65 billionaires reached nearly **\$500 billion**, growing by \$309 million *every day*. The richest 10 percent of Canadians control over **16 times more wealth** than the bottom 40 percent. Unequal taxation is not limited to individuals. Companies and corporations aren’t paying their fair share either.

This extreme wealth concentration is not accidental, but a product of a tax-system designed to benefit the ultra-rich. **The richest 1 percent pay an effective tax rate of just 23.6 percent, compared to 36.7 percent of average earners.** How are the rich able to avoid paying their fair share? Tax havens, tax loopholes, and capital gains exemptions, to name a few.

When we don’t have a system that taxes the ultra-rich effectively, their immense wealth is never redistributed through the economy or put towards essential public services like affordable housing, health, transportation, and shelter.

The concentration of wealth fuels the concentration of power. The wealthiest individuals in society hold undue influence over our governments, driving policy, funding, and legislative decisions that benefit the ultra-rich and the businesses they run. The ultra-rich often wield their power to undermine progress on climate change and to create the conditions that enable them to advance monopolies in key sectors – including media where misinformation runs rampant – creating a vicious



circle, further reinforcing power imbalances.

The impacts of wealth inequality are further deeply gendered, racialized, and rooted in colonial structures. [Nearly three-quarters of the richest 1 percent are men](#), while women and marginalized communities are overrepresented in low-paid jobs.

“Currently, Canada’s tax system rewards those with wealth over those who work. We need big changes or inequality will continue to spiral out of control.”

JARED WALKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CANADIANS FOR TAX FAIRNESS

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

THE DIGITAL SERVICES TAX (DST): The DST was expected to raise [\\$7.2 billion](#) over five years, which could have been reinvested in housing, transit, healthcare and other public services. However, in 2025, the government shelved the tax amid pressure from Donald Trump. Without the DST, American Big Tech companies continue to [extract billions from Canadian users](#), while paying little or no taxes in Canada.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX REFORM: Last year the federal government committed to reforms in capital gains taxes, reducing the disparity between taxes paid on income earned from investments, and the income earned from working. This was expected to generate \$19B in additional public revenues over five years.

OXFAM CANADA’S RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCE A PROGRESSIVE WEALTH TAX ON THE RICHEST CANADIANS IMMEDIATELY TO REDISTRIBUTE WEALTH AND POWER: A progressive wealth tax has the potential to raise over \$32B in its first year, and more than \$400B in the next decade that can be used to fund critical public services. This wealth tax should target the wealthiest, starting at 1 percent on net wealth over \$10 million, 2 percent on net wealth over \$50 million and 3 percent on net wealth over \$100 million.

ENSURE CANADIAN CORPORATIONS PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF TAXES BY IMPLEMENTING A PERMANENT EXCESS PROFITS TAX: In times of crisis, corporations

may earn outsized profits from price increases. For example, at the tail end of the pandemic and while inflation was in double digits, the grocery sector in Canada earned record profits of more than \$6B. Profit rates have fallen since their peak during the pandemic, but remain higher than previous. An excess profits tax is a way to curb corporations from profiteering during times of crisis. When a crisis that can lead to price increases occurs, the tax can be triggered and a corporation’s profits that surpass their pre-crisis average can be taxed at a higher rate.

END TAX HAVEN ABUSE: Canada is preparing to make billions in cuts to public spending while overlooking tackling tax haven abuse that could recapture significant government revenue. The largest corporations and wealthiest families in Canada hold over [\\$682B offshore](#), costing our government [\\$15B annually](#). To reclaim this tax revenue, we can start by eliminating the tax agreement loopholes that allow corporations to bring profits from tax havens to Canada tax-free. Instead, we should require corporations to have a legitimate business reason to set up subsidiaries in tax havens. Further, Canada should support multilateral efforts to curb the use of tax havens within the proposed [UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation](#).

BUILDING AN EQUITABLE CARE ECONOMY

SCORE: **YELLOW** – NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

With half of Canadians expected to give or receive care in their lifetimes, Canada's fragmented and under-resourced care systems put both caregivers and care recipients at risk; deepening gender, racial, and economic inequality.

Care work, both paid and unpaid, is foundational to Canadian society and the economy. Whether it's childcare, elder care, or disability support, care touches everyone's life. Despite its essential role, Canada's care systems are fragmented, underfunded, and deeply unequal. Caregivers shoulder enormous responsibilities with inadequate government support, while policy remains siloed and reactive, treating care as a private responsibility rather than a collective priority.

The care economy makes up more than **one in five jobs** in Canada, larger than manufacturing, nearly twice the size of construction, and almost three times the size of mining. While care work has the potential to be the backbone of the middle class, paid care workers — predominantly women, racialized people, and immigrants — endure low wages (a median of **\$20/hour**) and poor working conditions.

At the same time, **nearly half of Canadians** over age 15 provide unpaid care to loved ones. In 2019, unpaid care work was valued at over \$860B, equivalent to 37 percent of Canada's GDP. Unpaid caregivers are stretched thin, working with little support, leading to burnout, financial insecurity, and reduced ability to engage in paid work. Unpaid care responsibilities greatly reduce women's ability to pursue well paid jobs or other economic opportunities, ultimately undermining Canada's economic growth. With Canada facing demographic shifts, care needs will only increase. By 2043, one in four Canadians will be over 65, and **the population over 85 is expected to triple**, driving up demand for elder care.

Care cannot be outsourced or automated. It is a local, relational, and low-carbon sector. To build a stronger, more equitable economy, Canada should invest in care work as a vital public good and recognize that it is the future of decent work.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

THE CARE ECONOMY: In 2025, the federal government took meaningful steps to support the care economy, including through the creation of a **Care Economy Sector Table** and **continued investments** in early learning and childcare. It also committed to developing a National Caregiving Strategy. These efforts represent



significant and hard-won progress, yet gaps remain. Unlike many other high-income countries, Canada lacks a comprehensive national caregiving strategy to guide public investments, policymaking, and program delivery.

Financial supports for both care recipients and caregivers remain inadequate, and there is no robust federal legislation to ensure safe, affordable and high-quality long-term care. Migrant care workers, who play a pivotal role in the care economy, continue to experience precarious working conditions and limited pathways to permanent residency. Stronger labour protections and immigration reform are urgently needed to ensure stability in the workforce.

\$10-A-DAY CHILDCARE: The \$10-a-day childcare plan has reduced fees, but affordability remains **uneven**, and access to high-quality childcare is inequitable. Workforce shortages, driven by poor compensation, and a lack of publicly managed expansion continue to limit growth of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. In 2023, nearly half of young children lived in a **child care desert**, meaning there were over three kids for every licensed childcare spot.

OXFAM CANADA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITIZE THE CARE ECONOMY BY RECOGNIZING THE ESSENTIAL ROLES AND RIGHTS OF CAREGIVERS:

Implement a National Caregiving Strategy that ensures adequate income supports and access to services for caregivers, while improving conditions for care recipients.

SUPPORT THE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE: Invest \$10B over five years in the early learning and childcare workforce, ensuring fair compensation aligned with wage grids and benefits, to support the expansion of the \$10-a-Day Child Care Plan.

INVEST IN CRITICAL CHILDCARE INFRASTRUCTURE:

Increase the Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund by \$15B over five years to build more public and non-profit childcare spaces, including school-age programs, and ensure every family can access affordable care. Meeting the demand for affordable childcare requires sustained public investment and the expansion of public and non-profit services. Special measures are needed to ensure that low-income families have access to affordable, licensed childcare. High-quality universal childcare is a key predictor of children's developmental success, and ultimately, is an investment in the future leaders of Canada.



BODILY AUTONOMY AND HEALTH EQUITY



SCORE: **YELLOW** – NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

When people are denied contraception, abortion, safe births, shelter from violence, or accurate sexual and reproductive health information, the result is systemic inequality that robs people of their rights, health, safety, and dignity.

Canada's public health system is in crisis. Millions lack a primary healthcare provider, patients face long wait times, and hospitals are short-staffed. Labour wards are closing, forcing people to **travel hours to give birth**. Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services remains deeply inequitable across the country—particularly for contraception and abortion.

Canada is the only country with universal health care but no universal prescription drug coverage. A confusing patchwork leaves gaps, increases costs, and limits access. Canadians are forced to decide between contraception and paying bills. Lack of access to contraception leads to unintended pregnancies and higher health care costs. Access to abortion remains deeply unequal due to discrimination, an absence of easy-to-find information, lack of training for healthcare providers, and significant gaps in rural, remote areas. People are forced to travel out of their communities for abortion at their own cost.

Community-based organizations trying to fill the gaps to support people in accessing SRH services are underfunded, overwhelmed, and forced to turn away those most in need. These are organizations that have helped hundreds of people who needed an abortion and otherwise would not have been able to afford the plane ticket, gas money, food, hotel room, winter coat, taxi ride, or the childcare needed to make it to their appointment. A lack of access disproportionately impacts people in rural and remote communities, people in situations of poverty, single parents, people with substance use disorders, those facing intimate partner violence, and those who are homeless.

Young people lack accurate information about SRH. Comprehensive Sexuality Education is inconsistently and poorly implemented, and misinformation and disinformation spreads online.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is widespread in Canada with advocates raising the alarm on this growing epidemic; **40 percent of women have experienced intimate partner violence and two women are killed weekly by intimate partners**. Yet 700 women and over 200 children **are turned away from shelters every day**. Around 4.7 million women in Canada **have been sexually assaulted**. Chronically underfunded sexual assault centres have long waitlists; survivors are unable to access support needed to heal and recover. With economic insecurity rising, these numbers will only increase.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION TO IMPROVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH:

The Health Canada Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund supports community-based organizations to improve access to SRH information and services, especially for vulnerable populations. The 2024 Fall Economic Statement **committed to expand and make permanent the Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund**, with \$90M over six years. The 2025 Liberal election party election platform re-affirmed this, **committing to protect and permanently fund the Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund**.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: The 2025 Liberal election platform committed to continuing to invest in the National Action Plan to End GBV, however current levels of investments are not sufficient to meet needs, and the plan lacks effective accountability mechanisms. The recently elected government reinstated a dedicated Minister for Women and Gender Equality, which is crucial to providing the political and policy leadership required to prevent and respond to GBV.

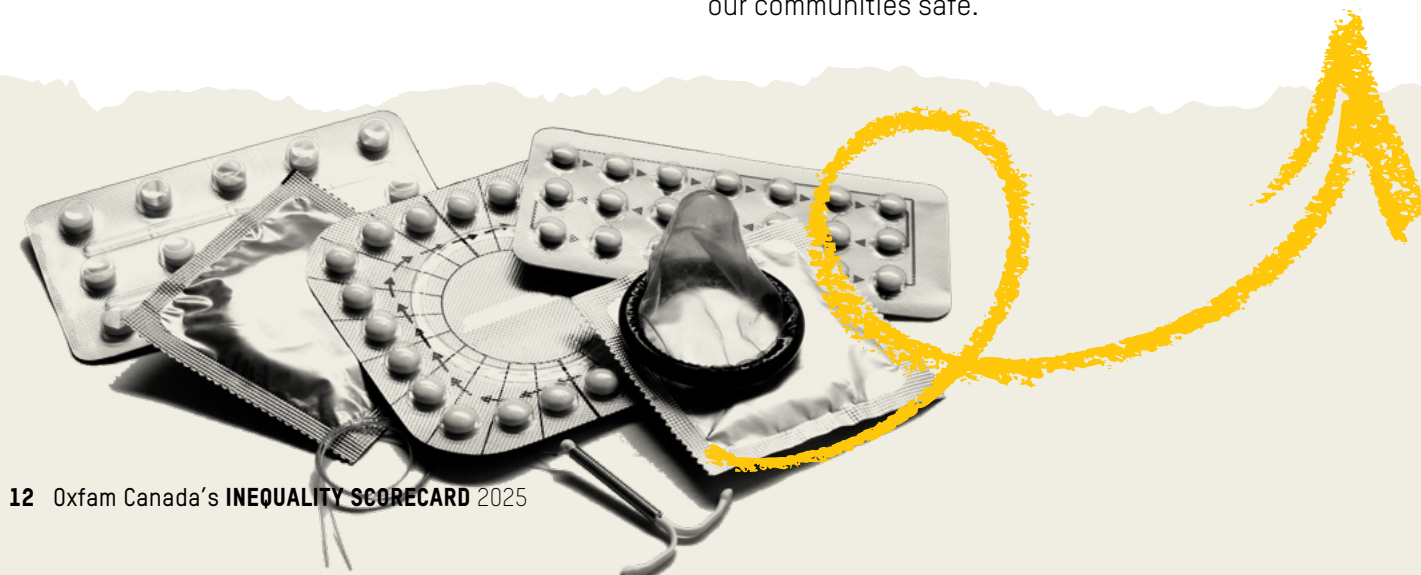
INVESTING IN IN VITRO FERTILIZATION: The 2025 Liberal election platform committed to funding an in vitro fertilization program, making it more affordable to become parents.

OXFAM CANADA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

INVEST IN AND PROTECT ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION: The government should invest more in public health care, including contraception and abortion. Critical to protecting access to contraception and abortion is the enforcement of the *Canada Health Act*, scaling up the Canada Health Transfer, and permanently funding the Canada Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund.

PROTECT AND EXPAND PHARMACARE: Despite the progress on establishing pharmacare, **only four provinces and territories** have signed deals with the federal government to date. The ability to afford contraception depends on where you live. Now that the federal government has finally committed to expanding pharmacare to all remaining provinces and territories, the government should prioritize signing bilateral agreements with remaining provinces as swiftly as possible, and ensure access to contraceptives through community-based sexual health centres and pharmacies.

ADEQUATELY FUND THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE: The government should appoint a national GBV commissioner and allocate \$600M annually over four years to implement the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence to meaningfully address GBV and ensure accountability and transparency. Adequate, steady, and sustainable funding is needed to support shelters, transitional housing, and community-based sexual assault centres, and to support community-based prevention work that make our communities safe.



CLIMATE INEQUALITY: PUTTING PEOPLE AND THE PLANET FIRST, NOT POLLUTERS



SCORE: **YELLOW** – NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

The climate crisis is accelerating and so are the impacts on inequality. Vulnerable communities are both experiencing the impacts of climate change and shouldering the costs. This while those responsible for climate chaos – ultra-rich corporations producing fossil fuels and other polluters – continue to reap record profits.

Climate disasters are **accelerating** at alarming rates – manifesting as wildfires, heatwaves, typhoons and hurricanes, devastating floods, and prolonged droughts. These shocks undermine livelihoods, food security, and access to clean water. The consequences of extreme weather are not distributed equally. Those causing it – the richest 1 percent and the fossil fuel industry – are least affected, while women, Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, people with disabilities, low-income households and low-income countries – those least responsible for global emissions – bear the brunt of climate chaos.

The economic and social toll is staggering. Climate change is expected to increase global hunger by an additional **180 million** people by 2050. In Canada, air pollution alone contributes to **17,400 premature deaths and \$146B in health costs** annually. The

impacts of climate change are creeping into our daily lives. Families face soaring grocery bills, food insecurity, rising insurance premiums, or difficulty accessing insurance altogether. When disaster strikes, as it did in many towns across Canada this year that suffered from wildfires, many struggled to access their insurance benefits or had no access to insurance at all. These everyday impacts erode economic and social security, pushing vulnerable households deeper into precarity.

Meanwhile, the most powerful worsen the crisis. In 2024, Canadian banks poured nearly **\$119.5B into financing for fossil fuels, contributing almost 14 percent of global financing**. Oxfam's research finds that globally, the world's top 585 most polluting fossil fuel companies made **more than \$500B** in profits in 2024, and instead of investing in renewable energy, have used those profits to payout shareholders a total of \$403B.

In 2024, Canada provided nearly **\$30B** in direct subsidies and public financing to the oil and gas industry, cementing a carbon-intensive future while ordinary people foot the bill. Current plans to explore expanding fossil fuel production and pipelines, under the guise of "major projects" escalates the potential for climate disasters and undermines Canada's responsibility to drive a just energy transition.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

CLIMATE FINANCE: Canada has promised under UNFCCC and COP agreements to contribute its **fair share** to global climate action. Canada pledged \$5.3B over the previous five years to support international climate finance, ranking second among major donors for its integration of gender equality focused commitments. However, **60 percent of this funding is delivered as loans** rather than grants, which reduces its real value and worsens the debt burden for climate vulnerable countries. Canada's next five-year commitment remains undefined.

TRANSITIONING TO A NET-ZERO ECONOMY: Canada has previously pledged to hold polluters accountable with an **emissions cap**, to phase out **fossil fuel subsidies**, and support the transition to sustainable jobs, but actions fall far short. Shortly after the 2025 election, the government passed legislation that would accelerate the regulatory process for "major projects," obfuscating the environmental impact assessment process and potentially violating the government's duty to consult Indigenous peoples and uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Oil and gas emissions, the largest source of pollution in Canada, **have increased 11 percent since 2005**, while subsidies and public financing continue to flow to the industry. With the carbon tax scrapped, Canada is now **projected to miss** its 2030 emissions reductions targets, and the government has yet to release a climate plan.

OXFAM CANADA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

DELIVER A SIGNIFICANTLY SCALED-UP FIVE-YEAR CLIMATE FINANCE COMMITMENT: The federal government should deliver a renewed climate finance commitment at no less than \$20B over the next five-year period. Funding should be prioritized to Least Developed Countries and delivered as grants so as not to further indebt countries already under heavy debt burdens. Further, funding should be directed at

"The urgency for ambitious climate action has never been more critical, with unprecedented heating, floods, storms, drought, wildfires, and melting glaciers across the planet. The human and ecological impacts of the climate crisis have led to increased inequality, loss of biodiversity, and more fragile food systems, livelihoods, and security."

THE CANADIAN COALITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

frontline communities and support gender equality and women's rights. Canada's next climate finance commitment should be allocated to priorities as follows – 40 percent of funding to climate adaptation, 40 percent to mitigation, and 20 percent to loss and damage.

INTRODUCE A WINDFALL PROFIT TAX ON FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCERS: The federal government should implement a new tax on the profits of fossil fuel producers, one that rises progressively with profits. A rich polluter profit tax is a measure that has the potential to raise more than \$400B globally in its first year. The revenues of the tax could be deployed in support of Canada's climate finance commitments and to drive our own transition to a net-zero economy.

ACCELERATE, AND SCALE-UP FUNDING FOR CANADA'S JUST TRANSITION: In 2024, the government passed Bill C-50, designed to aid in Canada's transition to "sustainable jobs." With climate change accelerating, the only way that the economy and the environment can work in harmony is via large-scale transition to net-zero energy. Canada should continue to advance investments that enable workers, educational institutions, and training centres to train workers for jobs in renewable energy, and at the same time, incentivize the transition to net-zero over carbon-intensive energies.

HATE, MARGINALIZATION, AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS



SCORE: **RED** – FAILING

Incidences of hate-motivated attacks and hate crimes are rising in Canada. Globally, human rights are under attack with the rise of authoritarianism and crackdowns on civil society.

Across the globe there is a complex web of interrelated trends taking root which deeply impact equity, justice, and freedom. People's fundamental rights are being impeded, attacked, and in some cases, eviscerated entirely. Inequality grows in the places that are starved of justice and freedom.

Canada has seen an explosion of hate-motivated incidents across the country. In the decade between 2013 and 2023, reports of hate-motivated crime increased by **400 percent**. However, most hate crimes are not in fact reported to police – research from the Canadian Anti-Hate Network notes **that less than 1 percent** of perceived hate crimes are captured in police-reported statistics. The scale of the challenge in Canada is much greater than the police-reported numbers suggest, and the police-reported numbers paint a skewed and inaccurate picture of who is most at risk of hate attacks and hate crimes.

In 2023, hate crimes targeting sexual orientation **increased 69 percent** from the previous year. From 2016 to 2023, this number increased by **388 percent**. **Transgender** and **gender diverse** individuals are particularly affected, including **racialized trans and**

non-binary people who face significantly higher rates of violence. Canada has also seen a rise in antisemitic incidents, of Islamophobia, and **anti-Palestinian racism**, and Canada continues to be a **hotbed for neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups**.

Across the world fundamental rights are being attacked and rolled back; one group that has been particularly targeted is migrants. Attacks on migrant rights are perhaps most flagrant in the United States. In Canada, pressure from the United States to strengthen border security has precipitated dangerous proposals that also directly attack the rights of migrants.

The federal government's recently introduced bill, C-12, *the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act*, which is meant to fast-track several elements of the highly controversial *Strong Borders Act*, or bill C-2. This new legislation further reinforces the same harmful changes to the immigration and refugee system the original bill did. C-12 is a direct attack on migrant rights and puts **survivors of gender-based violence** at immense and unnecessary risk.

There are many challenges with the bill. First, it will prohibit migrants who have been in Canada for more than one year from making refugee claims, putting persecuted individuals at risk. Second, it will make it **virtually impossible** to apply for refugee status for those entering from the United States – a country that is becoming less safe by the day. Third, the bill provides

the minister of immigration the power to revoke any application or stop the processing of applications en masse. This could lead to mass deportations as migrants are effectively made “out of status.”

The legislation also allows Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to share claimants’ personal data with other departments and jurisdictions without their consent. The consequences can be especially harmful to migrants, violence survivors, and people without immigration status. Undocumented workers who are attempting to assert labour rights could **inadvertently expose themselves to deportation**, as the department responsible for labour can share information with immigration and border enforcement.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

HATE: The federal government created an **Action Plan on Combating Hate**, comprised of three pillars which include empowering communities to identify and prevent hate, supporting victims and survivors, and building trust, partnerships and institutional readiness.

In late September, the government introduced Bill C-9, the **Combating Hate Act**, which amends the criminal code in various ways, codifies “hatred” and removes the requirement to obtain the Attorney General’s consent to lay hate-related charges. While only recently tabled, the bill has been criticized out of the gate, including for infringing on Charter rights related to peaceful assembly and protest, and for **removing of the role of the Attorney General in determining if a hate-related offence has occurred**.

OXFAM CANADA’S RECOMMENDATIONS

WITHDRAW BILL C-2 AND C-12: With the significant and severe attacks on rights this legislation would impose, the bills are unacceptable and need to be withdrawn.

WITHDRAW THE COMBATTING HATE ACT: With myriad flaws in the legislation, including related to constitutionality, the *Combating Hate Act* should be withdrawn. The federal government’s attention is better spent on advancing the Action Plan on Combatting Hate, and advancing Bill C-63, the **Online Harms Act**, which will make social media companies more accountable in protecting their users, including from hate.

ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY: The federal government should embed an anti-racism analysis in all legislation (similar to GBA+) and fund the **Anti-Racism Secretariat** to review all legislation and policy to ensure alignment with the advancement of race equity.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE



SCORE: **RED** – FAILING

Canada’s ongoing colonial systems continue to deny First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples access to land, justice and sovereignty. Policy and investments related to reconciliation should go beyond symbolism to equitably redistribute resources, fulfill land and title rights, and guarantee access to quality services and infrastructure.

The federal government often touts the importance of its relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Yet, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples continue to face systemic injustices rooted in modern colonialism. Inequalities in income, housing, healthcare, and child welfare remain stark. Systemic racism in the justice system continues to drive over incarceration of Indigenous Peoples, with Indigenous women incarcerated at rates up to **fifteen times higher** than non-Indigenous women.

Policies intended to capture distinctions between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples often fail to capture the lived realities of the more than **60 percent of Indigenous Peoples** who live off-reserve and in urban areas. Inadequate funding leaves communities scrambling to access shelter,

food, and healthcare, creating inequalities in access to basic services and undermining social and economic security. These gaps weigh most heavily on Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit people and Indigenous Peoples with disabilities.

Fast tracking major infrastructure projects via new legislation – **Bill C-5** – without comprehensive consultations with Indigenous communities, undermines Indigenous Peoples’ inherent rights and title, threatening their sovereignty and reinforcing colonial structures that perpetuate injustice and inequality.

The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people continues to reveal systemic violence and neglect. **One in five** victims of gender-related homicide are Indigenous women or girls. Despite the urgency and scale of this injustice, Indigenous women and girls lack sustained access to safety and prevention services that are designed, developed and delivered by and for Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are calling for the urgent launch of a **national Red Dress Alert system** to ensure the public is notified when an Indigenous woman, girl, or Two-Spirit person goes missing, similar to the Amber Alert system.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND

TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE: The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls concluded in June 2019 with the final report of [231 Calls for Justice](#). Today, only two of the 231 Calls for Justice are complete, and over half remain unaddressed. While the federal government has commenced work on a [pilot](#) Red Dress Alert system, it's only active in one province. In 2019, the federal government launched a five-year [National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking](#), yet it is now expired and a renewed strategy is yet to launch. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established to make Canadians aware of what happened in residential schools made [94 Calls to Action](#) to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation. Today, only 15 of those calls have been implemented.

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE JUSTICE

SYSTEM: To address overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice system, the federal government launched the [Indigenous Justice Strategy](#) in March 2025. However, the strategy largely excludes urban Indigenous communities and lacks culturally appropriate, community-led programs for urban communities to address root causes of involvement with the criminal justice system.

URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: The federal government has made a range of new investments for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in health, housing, research, and climate. However, the government's distinctions-based approach still largely excludes urban Indigenous communities from many funding opportunities and leaves them underrepresented in advisory and governance tables and emergency planning bodies.

"Over the past 30 years multiple commissions, inquiries, and taskforces released reports with recommendation that really focus on creating equitable conditions for Indigenous Peoples. The answers are out there but they continue to sit on shelves and conditions have worsened for Indigenous People. Lack of political will and follow through across multiple levels of government continue to fail Indigenous communities."

KARA LOUTTIT, INTERIM POLICY AND
RESEARCH MANAGER, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

OXFAM CANADA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

FULLY IMPLEMENT THE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND FULFIL THE

CALLS TO JUSTICE: To ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are effectively protected, the federal government should fully implement the [National Action Plan](#), a response to the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* and provide funding to advance costed and measurable steps to fulfil the Calls for Justice.

BETTER INCLUDE URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN FEDERAL DECISION-MAKING BODIES:

Ensure that federal strategies and funding across health, housing, climate disasters, justice, children and families, and research explicitly include urban Indigenous communities and guarantees their representation in decision-making and governance tables.

PROTECT AND RESPECT INDIGENOUS RIGHTS: Broadly, and specifically as it relates to advancing major infrastructure projects, the federal government needs to better engage in meaningful consultations with Indigenous Peoples, respect treaty rights, respect and protect the right to [Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#), and respect its full obligations under the [United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP



SCORE: **GREEN** – PROGRESS

Armed conflicts, climate disasters and economic disruptions are pushing millions into poverty and displacement, while undermining global efforts to address inequality. Canada has a role to play in making the world more equal.

The world is at a breaking point. The 3 lethal C's – cuts, climate and conflict—are wreaking havoc on communities across the world. Over 295 million people are currently facing acute hunger, the most severe level of food insecurity, and over 120 million people are forcibly displaced. Experts estimate more than 1.2 billion people will be displaced by 2050 due to extreme weather and climate disasters.

While this should be a moment for the world to come together to tackle multiple crises, we are witnessing a collapse of global cooperation, a rapid decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and a buildup of military might. The Group of Seven (G7) countries, which together contribute three-quarters of all ODA, are set to slash their aid spending by 28 percent in 2026 compared to 2024 levels. The most severe cut to ODA has come from the United States where the Trump administration has shut down the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which funded the majority of U.S. humanitarian and development assistance worldwide to people in some of the worst crises. Aid cuts could cost millions of lives by leaving

the poorest and most marginalized communities without access to food, water and health care.

Civil society and human rights defenders the world over are losing access to critical funding to defend and advance human rights. This is happening at a time when the world has also lost one of the staunchest global defenders of women's rights and 2SLGBTQI+ rights: the United States. The United States has reversed course and is now implementing a consistent anti-2SLGBTQI+ and anti-gender agenda, with a strong focus on attacking the rights of transgender people, emboldening other hostile governments to follow suit. Some of the most pressing examples where 2SLGBTQI+ rights are threatened globally include Uganda, Kenya and Turkey.

There is a generational opportunity for Canada to play a positive leadership role in the current global context – by maintaining its commitment to ODA and stepping up while others draw back, and standing in defense of human rights and adherence to international law. This will require a coherent foreign policy approach that champions rights, democracy and rule of law, in all contexts.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY: The 2025 Liberal election platform confirmed that Canada "champions

human rights, democracy and the rule of law” and “stands for a world where everyone can live with equal rights, dignity and respect” – all of which is currently under threat. The platform also committed to maintaining international humanitarian assistance at no less than \$800M per year and underscored the party’s support for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and funding for the LGBTQ+ programs. While these are important commitments, the platform fell short on cementing Canada’s commitment to maintaining current levels of ODA.

While Canada recognized Palestinian Statehood at the 80th UN General Assembly, it has done little to stop the genocide in Gaza through effective diplomatic and economic measures. Although stating otherwise in the media, a recent investigation uncovered that Canada continues to export weapons and military equipment to Israel.

PROTECTING RIGHTS ABROAD: Canada has invested significantly in protecting and preserving rights abroad – specifically 2SLGBTQI+ rights. The federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan is a whole-of-government approach to advance and strengthen 2SLGBTQI+ rights. The federal government also administers the LGBTQ2I International Assistance Program to promote human rights and improve socioeconomic outcomes for 2SLGBTQI+ people in developing countries, with funding set aside to continue.

OXFAM CANADA’S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROTECT OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE:

Maintain and protect Canada’s ODA at \$10.6B as a strategic investment in global stability and prosperity.

ADVANCE MEASURES TO END THE GENOCIDE IN GAZA:

Halt all Canadian weapons and military transfers to Israel, pursue all available diplomatic and economic measures to end the violence and ensure full and immediate access to humanitarian aid in Gaza, and support international legal and accountability mechanisms to stop all war crimes and crimes against humanity.

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND FUNDAMENTAL

RIGHTS: Sustain Canada’s focus on supporting and funding programs that advance gender equality, including for sexual and reproductive health and rights, unpaid and paid care, and 2SLGBTQI+ rights.



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- Oxfam America
- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
- The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
- The National Right to Housing Network

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