

## Offensive Canadian Military Posters in Public Places: correspondence with the Minister

Posted by

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### Offensive Canadian Military Posters in Public Places: correspondence with the Minister.

**PEJ News**- Joan Russow - Global Compliance Research Project - Recently, citizens have become concerned about large National Defence military recruitment posters lining public transit shelters in Victoria, British Columbia. Apparently, National Defence is posting these propaganda messages in public spaces throughout Canada. These posters are in violation of the Canadian Standards Act. Enclosed is correspondence with the Hon. Peter MacKay, Canadian Minister of National Defence.

[www.PEJ.org](http://www.PEJ.org) < <https://www.pej.org> > **COMPLAINT SENT TO THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

From: Joan Russow [mailto:jrussow@gmail.com]  
Sent: Thursday, 10 April, 2008 13:08  
To: +MCU@MCU@Ottawa-Hull  
Subject: Re: offensive recruitment posters in transit shelters.

The Hon. Peter MacKay  
Minister of Defence  
dnd\_mdn@forces.gc.ca

Joan Russow Ph.D.  
1230 St. Patrick St.  
Victoria, BC V8S 4Y4

April 10, 2008

Dear Minister

I am writing to express my concern about the plastering of DND recruitment posters in public spaces such as transit shelters.

Recently, citizens have become concerned about large National Defence military recruitment posters lining public transit shelters in Victoria, British Columbia. Apparently, National Defence is posting these propaganda messages in public spaces throughout Canada.

The Jim Pattison Group is responsible for the recruitment posters in public spaces such as transit shelters. A representative from the Pattison Group claims that they are abiding by standards created by the Advertising Standards Council of Canada.

Apart from the fact that these posters are probably offensive to Canadians, the majority of whom have been opposed to the belligerent and offensive role played by the Canadian military in Afghanistan, these posters also could be deemed to violate the Canadian Advertising Standards Code (Social Values and Safety). The National Defence recruitment posters appear to be in violation of the following provisions in the Advertising Standards Council's code.

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### **j. Social Values 2**

A range of values that are inconsistent with the moral, ethical or legal standards of contemporary Canadian society must not be encouraged or portrayed.

### **MOST OF SOCIETY'S VALUES OF CANADIANS ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT BELLIGERENT ROLE THAT CANADA IS PLAYING IN AFGHANISTAN**

In 2001, Canada joined the United States in a belligerent action against Afghanistan. The US misrepresented a blatant act of revenge as being justified as an act of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. As a lawyer, you would be fully cognizant that this act could not fulfill the criteria of an act of self-defence. At that time the Conservative, Canadian Alliance, and the Liberals failed to act on the appeal by the NDP to respect the Charter of the United Nations by urging the United States to invoke the Chapter VI provision to go to the International Court of Justice. As a result Canada, since 2001, has been a belligerent in Afghanistan. There is a fundamental principle of international law that a belligerent on the ground must not be concurrently the "bestower" of reconstruction. Instead Canada should withdraw immediately and, with other belligerent states, form an international fund for compensation for the damage to Afghanistan. This view is shared by most Canadians and is reflective of the social values of Canada.

### **i. Safety 2**

Adults or children must not be portrayed in clearly unsafe acts or situations except where the message primarily and obviously promotes safety.

### **MILITARY RECRUITMENT POSTERS PORTRAY ADULTS ENGAGING IN UNSAFE ACTS THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT PROMOTING SAFETY**

Given that the posters violate the Advertising Standards Code, they should be removed immediately.

Yours Sincerely

Joan Russow (Ph.D.)

### **RESPONSE FROM THE HON. PETER MACKAY, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

"dnd\_mdn@forces.gc.ca" JULY 7, 2008

Dear Ms Russow

Thank you for your correspondence of April 10, 2008, concerning Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces recruitment advertising posters. Please accept my apology for this delay in responding.

One of the key roles of the Canadian Forces is to defend Canada's values and interests at home and abroad, as well as provide assistance to international security. Canadian Forces

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members are well respected for their leadership and professionalism.

The provisions you mention, from the Interpretation Guidelines of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, deal specifically with advertising to children. As our recruiting advertisements are addressed to Canadians who are 18 to 34 years old, these provisions do not apply. Even so, we do get approvals through the Television Bureau of Canada before airing television advertisements.

The advertising posters reflect the reality of today's Canadian Forces personnel, who serve our country through a variety of different occupations in the military. Our recruitment objective is to position the Canadian Forces as an employer of choice with over 100 full-time and part-time job opportunities. Throughout the development of these posters, extensive research and testing were conducted with our key audience. This demographic found that these ads portrayed, realistically, the elements that attract them to join the Canadian Forces: leadership, stimulating work experiences, and mental and physical challenges.

I appreciate your taking the time to write, and I trust this information is of assistance.

Sincerely,

Peter G. MacKay  
Minister of National Defence

MCU2008-03095

RESPONSE TO THE RESPONSE FROM MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

July 8, 2008

Hon. Peter G. MacKay  
Minister of National Defence

Dear Minister

Thank you for your e-mail response to my request for information.

The problem is that the posters are in bus shelters where they can be seen by children, and for that reason they are in violation of the standards.

Sincerely

Joan Russow ( Ph.D.)  
Global Compliance Research Project