

## Policy on Non-Violent Protest

### Purpose

- This policy is a guide for actions of representatives of Oxfam Canada, particularly during protest events that can be rapidly changing and unpredictable.
- This policy is intended to facilitate participation by representatives of Oxfam Canada in public demonstrations and protests, while at the same time helping to protect the interests and reputation of Oxfam Canada.

### Scope

This policy applies to all persons who identify themselves as being associated with Oxfam Canada, including staff, members, volunteers, and partners.

### Principles

- Non-violent protest is a longstanding and honourable means of expressing concern. It is an integral component of active citizenship.
- Freedom of speech, expression and association are fundamental to a healthy democracy and the achievement of justice. At times, it is important to take a clearly visible stand in order to achieve social justice. Consequently, Oxfam Canada views non-violent protest as a positive means of expression, and will initiate as well as participate in it as appropriate and according to specific circumstances.
- Women and girls throughout the world are disproportionately affected by violence in their homes, communities, and societies. Responding with violence may only escalate the harm to them. However, non-violent protest may serve to reduce that risk.
- Injustice often prompts public anger. While that anger may be justified and understandable, it is almost always counterproductive if it is manifested in a threatening manner.
- Oxfam Canada holds non-violence as a key principle because:
  - We strive for a more peaceful and non-violent world.
  - We situate our commitment to non-violence within our vision of peace, cooperation, development, environmental sustainability and respect for human rights.
  - Our methods must be consistent with our goals.
  - Our message of peace and justice is not served by images of violence and destruction.
  - Our commitment to human rights must be reflected in our public actions.

### Specific content

- Representatives of Oxfam Canada will not engage in actions which threaten persons or property (such as barricades)
- Oxfam Canada discourages any activities that put Oxfam Canada representatives or anyone else in physical danger.
- Oxfam Canada representatives do not engage in aggressive behaviour towards police or other security personnel.
- As public protests are fundamentally about visible expression of a point of view, Oxfam Canada representatives will not normally disguise their identity when participating in non-violent protest. However, there may be very limited instances (such as when puppets are used or when protection from tear gas is required) that necessitate temporary hiding of identity.
- Oxfam Canada does not condone violent, discriminatory or sexist language during protest activities.