

October 4, 2017

Dear Minister Goodale,

I am writing to you on behalf of the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel. We are a network composed of members and friends of the United Church of Canada.

The installation of Gov. General Julie Payette reminded us of the importance of signs and symbols. Remembrance Day reminds us of Canada's history of support for peace and justice internationally.

Recently you attended a meeting in occupied East Jerusalem. This was a symbolic pat on the back for the Netanyahu government and a slap in the face to the Palestinian people.

As you are aware, in December, the UN Security Council passed SC 2334 that chastised Israel for its ongoing violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention in relation to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and further incursions of the wall beyond the Green Line.

Your meeting occurred shortly after the Israelis demolished four elementary schools in Palestine. In response, the Belgian deputy Prime Minister condemned this action, "By undermining such humanitarian projects, Israel contravenes its international obligations as an occupying power."

These actions by the Israelis are tantamount to collective punishment targeting vulnerable Palestinian children and will inflame tensions for generations to come and represent a further violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As a former human rights observer in the West Bank, I witnessed on a daily basis Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws. It was especially disturbing to witness the intimidation tactics of the Israeli military against Palestinian children including arresting and putting on trial children as young as 12 in Military Courts.

- Would you please explain why you breached diplomatic protocol by meeting in East Jerusalem? After all, would you have met with Russian officials in the Russian occupied sections of Georgia?
- Alternatively, does your government reject the concerns of the Security Council outlined in SC 2334?
- Further, do you as Minister of Public Safety, believe we actually have anything to learn with respect to public security from the only nation in the world that prosecutes 12 year old children before Military Courts?

This Canadian government needs to stand up for human rights around the world – especially for the rights of children.

Peace, Paix, Salaam, Shalom,

Rev. Steve Berube

Chair: United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel

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