



UNJPPI

United Network for Justice and Peace
in Palestine and Israel

15 May 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa ON Canada

pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Deteriorating Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel

The United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel ('UNJPPI') is a grassroots network of United Church of Canada members and friends working for a just peace in Palestine/Israel through education and advocacy. At this time our organization and members are prayerfully following news of events in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel as the conflict there worsens moment by moment.

We have read the May 8th Global Affairs Canada Statement. It specifically references the situation in Jerusalem and rightly expresses deep concern that recent decisions on settlements, demolitions and evictions, including Sheik Jarrah, will undermine the prospects for a two-state solution. It ends with the statement that Canada stands ready to support efforts for a two-state solution.

You and your government will recognize that the situation has markedly deteriorated since May 8th. The Israeli security forces stormed Haram esh-Sharif while Muslim's were worshipping there during the holy month of Ramadan. As this would be seen by many as an attack on Islam, it is not surprising that it led to a violent response from Gaza, followed by violence between Jews and Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Recent events suggest the anger is spreading beyond Israel and the oPt.

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The May 8th Statement recognizes the importance of international law and human rights, as does the long-standing *Canadian policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. The problem is that this policy and other Canadian government statements relating to Israel and the oPt appear to completely disregard the reality on the ground there. Under the Oslo Accords a Palestinian state was to be created in the West Bank and Gaza, with Israel handing over control of Area C - the 60% of the West Bank it controls outright - to the Palestinian Authority over 5 years. That has not happened. Instead, Israel is expelling Palestinians from Area C and using the land for the construction of illegal Israeli settlements or colonies – a war crime under international law. What is happening in Sheikh Jarrah is an identical process imposed illegally under international law on Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Today there are over 600,000 illegal Israeli colonists in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, a number that is growing every year.

The basic underpinning of Canadian policy is that Israel and the Palestinians will negotiate a settlement satisfactory to both parties. This is something that might realistically be expected if the two parties were relatively equal in strength and bargaining power. They are not. Israel has all the power and apparently has no respect for either international law or Palestinian human rights.

Respected human rights organizations including B'tselem and Human Rights Watch have concluded that Israel's actions in effecting its continuing control over the entire area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea amount to apartheid. Whether the Canadian government accepts this conclusion or not, the Canadian public's broad support for human rights and the fundamental principles of international law demand that the Canadian government speak out for the protection of Palestinian human rights, including an end to the military occupation of the West Bank, an end to the annexation of East Jerusalem and an end to the illegal siege of Gaza. International law recognizes that a lasting peace cannot be built on oppression and military might. It can only be built on justice and human rights protection for all.

Please make a public statement in support of equal human rights for all people living in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, and an end to the Israeli military occupation.

Yours respectfully,



George Bartlett
Chair
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