



# UNJPPI

United Network for Justice and Peace  
in Palestine and Israel

30 July 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Ottawa ON Canada  
[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

Dear Prime Minister,

**Re: Canadian Government Actions Need to Change in Response to ICJ Advisory Opinion**

As has been noted in previous letters to you, UNJPPI is a grassroots network of United Church of Canada members and friends working for a just peace in Palestine/Israel.

We are writing this letter soon after news of a tragic rocket strike into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. It reportedly killed 12 children and teens. While Hezbollah denies responsibility, Israel is holding Hezbollah responsible, raising new fears of a regional war.

While the killing of children and other non-combatants can never be justified, we cannot help but wonder whether there would have been a rocket strike if there were no military occupation and no illegal Israeli settlements.

[\*Canadian policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict\*](#) states that Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over territories occupied in 1967, namely the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The policy also states that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

These policy statements are in line with the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice ('ICJ') which found Israel's construction of its barrier or wall inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem to be illegal. This is also incorporated into the Canadian policy.

George Bartlett  
UNJPPI Chair  
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On 19 July 2024 the ICJ issued a new Advisory Opinion. After a thorough analysis of the occupation, its impact and the law, the ICJ found that:

1. Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) is unlawful;
2. Israel is obligated to end its unlawful presence in the oPt as rapidly as possible;
3. the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the oPt;
4. the State of Israel has the obligation to make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the oPt.

Hopefully the *Canadian Policy* document will soon be amended to reflect this latest ICJ decision. However, even before the policy is amended it is crucial that the Canadian government decisions and actions be guided by it.

The ICJ also stated that all States are under obligation not to recognize as legal the situation created by the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the oPt. At para. 278 of the decision, it stated this obligation includes, *inter alia*:

- to abstain from economic or trade dealing with Israel concerning the oPt or part thereof which may entrench its unlawful presence in the territory; and
- to take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the oPt.

We trust that Canadian officials are making a detail analysis of the ICJ Advisory Opinion to assess actions Canada should take in response. In our Ask below, we suggest some immediate actions.

Individual Canadians also want to take non-violent actions to help end the Israeli military occupation, now clearly illegal. Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions ('BDS') actions are actions many Canadians are adopting. Yet Canada has policies that are clearly intended to block such actions. It is time for these policies to be revoked.

We note the July 26<sup>th</sup> statement that you issued with the prime ministers of Australia and New Zealand. We are disappointed that, apart from the call on the Israeli prime minister to respond substantively to the ICJ Advisory Opinion, the statement appears to be totally oblivious to it. Perhaps that is because it was issued so soon after the advisory opinion. Hopefully Canada will soon issue a more fulsome statement identifying actions Canada is taking in response to the advisory opinion.

#### *What We are Asking of our Canadian Government*

1. As in previous letters, we urge the termination of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement ('CIFTA') which does not exclude products produced in illegal Israeli settlements or containing components or ingredients from those settlements. By failing to clearly exclude such products, CIFTA assists the maintenance of the illegal situation and is therefore in violation of the obligations of UN member states.

2. We again urge Canada to implement a full two-way arms embargo on Israel. This needs to be of all military goods, including previously authorized sales and purchases. While a major concern is with arms and armaments destined for use in Gaza, Israel is now regularly attacking Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, resulting in deaths, injuries and property destruction there. None of this would be happening if there were not an illegal occupation and illegal settlements.
3. We urge the Canadian government to review its laws and policies to identify any that discourage individual Canadians, Canadian corporations and Canadian not-for-profit organizations from promoting and participating in BDS campaigns intended to encourage Israel to end its military occupation, to support equal rights for all living under land it controls, and to permit the return of Palestinian refugees.
4. We urge Canada to work with the United Nations and its other member states to identify sanctions that should be imposed on Israel to persuade it to comply with international law and the ICJ Advisory Opinion.

Yours respectfully,

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UNJPPI Co-Chair

c.c.

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