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**Mennonite  
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Network**

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#### CANADA'S STANCE ON PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Carney:

In the wake of the recent federal election, we offer our well wishes and prayers for you as you begin your mandate as Prime Minister of Canada. With this letter we also want to urge that Canada exercise robust, principled leadership and integrity in regard to the urgent need for freedom and justice in Palestine-Israel.

As people for whom peace and nonviolence is core to our Christian faith, we believe that the current situation in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, has become a global moral litmus test for adherence to international law, human rights, and the dignity of all. **The world must act now.**

We believe that as a practicing Catholic Christian, you too seek peace based on justice. The Christian minority in the Palestinian territories have for many years issued strong calls to their global siblings in faith confronting the systems of oppression under which Palestinian people live. The late Pope Francis was a champion of Palestinian human rights and self-determination, and it appears that Pope Leo IX will continue that advocacy. **We would like to see you and your cabinet support this moral stance in both word *and* deed.**

Unfortunately, we feel that for years, there has been **a glaring gap between Canada's [official policy on Palestine and its actions](#)**. Canadian politicians often affirm that Canada is a "steadfast friend and ally" of the state of Israel, while doing little to hold Israel to account for its injustices toward Palestinians, particularly in its decades-old development of illegal settlements in the West Bank, and in its siege of Gaza. Canada affirms adherence to international law, while voting against most UN resolutions on Israel's violations of that law. Canada maintains a free trade agreement with Israel, even as that trade is, by design, at the expense of the Palestinian economy. Sadly, these gaps remain in place even in the wake of Israel's vastly disproportionate retaliatory destruction of Gaza following the atrocities of Hamas militants on October 7, 2023—and even after the International Court of Justice's warning, a year ago, of Israel plausibly committing genocide. **Canada must take more decisive action now.**

We applaud Canada's resumption of support for UNRWA in early 2024, after the debunking of false claims of UNRWA collaboration with Hamas fighters. We affirm Canada's gestures and words of support for Gazans trying to flee Gaza. We are also glad to hear the new foreign minister, Anita Anand, condemn Israel's blockage of humanitarian aid as "unacceptable." And the more recent joint statement

with the U.K. and France, condemning Israel's most recent intentions to control, starve, and ethnically cleanse Gaza—this too is laudable.

**Still, the time is now to do more.** We ask that the government of Canada to adopt the following measures:

- **Recognition of the state of Palestine**, following the lead of fellow democracies of Ireland, Spain, Finland, and others;
- **Suspension of CIFTA**, the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement;
- **A comprehensive arms embargo on Israel**—including a ban on Canadian export of parts to the US for military equipment and munitions destined for Israel (see this [report](#) on Magellan Aerospace's contribution to the F-35 bombers Israel uses on Gaza);
- **An official re-evaluation of Canada's endorsement** of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism, which conflates antisemitism with criticism of the state of Israel (thus stifling voices calling Israel to account for its violations of international and humanitarian law);
- **Refusal to criminalize groups calling for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions** against Israel; and
- **An offer to facilitate medical evacuations** for Gazans most affected by Israel's destruction of hospitals throughout Gaza;

Mr. Carney, as a nation, Canadians are recognizing the historic evils that accompanied our own history of settler colonialism and structural racism toward the Indigenous peoples of our land. This should sensitize us to the experience of the Palestinians living under the racism and colonial intentions of the state of Israel. **In the past, Canada has been a global leader in establishing in international law and good governance; why can we not resume such a role in Palestine-Israel?**

In gratitude for your attention to our concerns, in hopes for bold and creative response, and in prayer for a new dawning of justice and peace for all,

Mennonite Church Canada Palestine-Israel Network

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