

**Position Paper: Opposing Illegal Israeli Territorial Ambitions**

- A. Canada must vocally oppose illegal Israeli territorial ambitions and join the international condemnation of Israeli “settlements.”** In 2016, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2334 in a 14–0 vote. The resolution confirmed the international consensus that Israel's settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories (including East Jerusalem) constitutes a “flagrant violation” of international law and has “no legal validity.”
1. Canada must demonstrate support for the international consensus by condemning Israeli settlements. The Trudeau government has been unwilling to pressure Israel on the illegal settlements. At some points, even the Trump administration has been more critical¹ of Israeli settlements than Canada. So Canada must:
 - i. Condemn all Israeli expansions of its colonies (a.k.a. “settlements”) in Palestinian territory - the most consistent and egregious violation of international law in the conflict, with Israeli colonists numbering over 600,000. The last half of 2018 saw Israel expanding its illegal settlements at “unprecedented levels” – with more than 7000 new housing units advancing in various stages²
 - ii. Condemn Israel’s illegal establishment of businesses on stolen land in the Palestinian territories, as highlighted in Human Rights Watch’s Jan. 2016 report, *Occupation Inc.: How Settlement Businesses Contribute to Israel’s Violations of Palestinian Rights*.³
 1. Illegal Israeli industrial zones in the West Bank confiscate more Palestinian land than the settlements themselves. In addition to settlements, there are approximately 20 Israeli industrial zones in the West Bank covering about 1,365 hectares, and Israeli settlers cultivate 9,300 hectares of land. In comparison, the built-up area of settlements cover only about 6,000 hectares (although their municipal borders encompass a much larger area).⁴
 2. Participating international companies are implicated in Israel’s human rights abuses. Human Rights Watch concludes that by virtue of doing business in or with settlements or settlement businesses, international companies contribute to Israel’s violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses.
 - iii. Vote to condemn Israeli settlements at the UN. Every year, in lopsided votes, the UN condemns Israel’s human rights violations in the occupied territories, yet the Trudeau government refuses to add its voice. For example, in November 2018, the Canadian government voted against resolution A/C.4/73/L.20 condemning Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan.⁵
- B. Canada must condemn Trump’s Golan Heights Decree.** In March 2019, US President Trump became the first world leader to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967. Trump’s decree inappropriately confers legitimacy to Israel’s decades-long military occupation and illegal colonization of Syrian territory.
1. Canada must join international partners who oppose Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. International law does not allow acquisition of a territory by force. Nonetheless, following the 1967 War, Israel sought to disregard international law by announcing the annexation of the Golan Heights in 1981. Soon afterwards, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 497 (1981) declaring Israel’s annexation announcement as “null and void and without international legal effect.” Since then, the international

community has repeatedly chastised Israel for its colonial expansion in the Golan Heights.

2. Canada must join with allies in vocally condemning Trump's decree. Key Canadian allies such as the France and the EU have already condemned Trump's Golan Heights decree as a violation of international law. While Global Affairs Canada issued a March 2019 statement affirming that "Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the Golan Heights," the government has yet to condemn Trump's unprecedented decree.

C. Canada must condemn Netanyahu's election promise to annex Palestinian territory. During Israel's April 2019 elections, incumbent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised to annex Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank if elected to another term. Moreover, Netanyahu vowed that Israel "would continue to control the entire territory west of the Jordan River," i.e. all of the West Bank and Gaza.

1. Canada must condemn any unilateral or illegal Israeli moves, and insist that the status of the West Bank be resolved through negotiations. The premise behind the two-state solution is that the final status of the West Bank and Gaza be resolved by bilateral peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Until then, Canada must continue to oppose any Israeli designs for the West Bank, including Israel's declared annexation of East Jerusalem.

D. Canada must consider more aggressive ways to pressure Israel to respect international law. Clearly, lukewarm admonishments from international players has had little effect in discouraging Israeli expansionism. If Canada were serious about persuading Israel to cease its violations of international law, it would consider some or all of the following:

1. Economic pressure. Rather than signing new trade deals with Israel (like Bill C-85 passed in recent months), Canada should consider punitive trade sanctions. E.g. Cessation of preferential tariff agreements; cancellation of joint research deals (e.g. Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation, CIIRDF); labelling of Israeli settlement goods, banning of Israeli settlement goods, other trade sanctions against Israel, etc.
2. Greater diplomatic pressure. Canada provides diplomatic cover for Israel in a number of ways: protecting Israeli positions in votes at the UN; security sharing arrangements; providing Israeli consular services in Venezuela; etc.

¹ "Trump Administration Reiterates Concerns About Israeli Settlements in Latest Talks," Newsweek, Mar. 24, 2017.

² "Six-Month Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, (Reporting period July-December 2018)," The Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA), Feb. 4, 2019.

³ "Occupation Inc.: How Settlement Businesses Contribute to Israel's Violations of Palestinian Rights," Human Rights Watch, January 19, 2016.

⁴ "Occupation Inc.: How Settlement Businesses Contribute to Israel's Violations of Palestinian Rights," Human Rights Watch, January 19, 2016.

⁵ "Fourth Committee Approves 12 Drafts, Including 9 on Israeli-Palestinian Questions," United Nations, Nov. 16, 2018.