

CJPME's Middle East New Deal, v1 Palestine-Israel Issues



A List of Concerns for Candidates in the 2019 Federal Election
Liste de demandes aux candidat(e)s à l'élection fédérale de 2019

*Assembled by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
Préparé par Canadiens pour la justice et la paix au Moyen-Orient*

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Preface

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is pleased to offer this guide to the policy challenges for Canada in Palestine-Israel for the 2019 federal election. In this initial draft of our “Middle East New Deal” (MEND), we are focusing on the Israel-Palestine issue.

Under the Chrétien government, Canada was viewed as a relatively honest broker between parties on Palestine-Israel. Under the Oslo process, for example, Canada was gavel-holder for the accord’s Refugee Working Group. More recent governments, however, have adopted rhetoric strongly biased in favour of Israel.

Canadians expect their representatives to adopt a principled and balanced approach to Palestine-Israel. It is important that election candidates be sensitized to the harsh realities in Palestine-Israel, and be ready to address them once in office. This document provides information to make candidates more cognizant of the issues, and enable them to contribute constructively to improve human rights and security in both Palestine and Israel.

CJPME is a grassroots, secular, non-partisan organization working to empower Canadians of all backgrounds to promote justice, development and peace in the Middle East. As a non-partisan organization, we recommend our proposals and reflections to all parties across Canadian society.

Ultimately, we have designed this document so that organizations and individuals can better engage federal candidates in discussion on Israel-Palestine. Use this guide get federal election candidates thinking about and committing to justice and peace in Israel-Palestine.

CJPME’s three policy pillars are 1) respect for international law; 2) the belief that all parties in a conflict should be held to the same standard; and 3) the belief that violence is not a solution. These principles – among others – have guided the development of content for this document. For more information about CJPME, please visit our website at www.cjpme.org.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide should be used by individuals and organizations alike to screen candidates in the lead-up to the 2019 Federal Election, and also to engage them in discussion on important issues affecting the Middle East. It is important to get candidates thinking about the situation in Israel-Palestine, and to garner their support for the policy positions outlined here. Candidates should understand that these points are important to many Canadians. Therefore, if they wish to gain public support, they must commit to action on these issues.

This document contains seven different policy positions, each one structured in a similar fashion:

- Every point includes an **Overview** section, which provides necessary context and background information. This section will allow you to be well-informed and well-versed when engaging in conversation with candidates.
- The **Questions for Federal Candidates** portion outlines some questions that you may use should you encounter pushback from candidates. This section also includes some questions that may be used to push for commitments from candidates, should they be elected. Candidates' answers to these questions will also help you determine whether or not they are serious about supporting human rights and justice in Palestine-Israel.
- Following this section, you will find our **Supporting Points**, which should help you validate and substantiate your claims throughout your conversation. This section outlines how a given policy position is supported by international law, UN resolutions, or other credible sources. It also delineates Canada's official foreign policy in relation to this issue, and how government practices often contradict this policy.
- The final section, **Recommendations for Canada**, puts forth some suggestions for ways that Canada's foreign policy may be reoriented and improved.

As you move through this document, feel free to pick and choose the points in this guide that resonate most with you.

In reading this guide, you will come to see that the Canadian government's current practices often do not match its stated foreign policy objectives. If this frustrates you, we encourage you to challenge candidates and take action. Our hope is that this document inspires both the candidates and the electorate to get vocal, get organized and make a difference.

1 Foreign Affairs – Diplomatic / Trade / Treaties / Sanctions

1.1 Pressure Israel Economically to Respect Palestinian Rights

Overview

During the 1967 war, Israel invaded and militarily occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Over 50 years later, Israel continues to occupy and colonize the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while imposing a land, sea and air blockade on Gaza.¹ This 50-year occupation has involved systematic human rights abuses, including collective punishment, routine use of excessive force, and regular demolition of Palestinian homes. Meanwhile, Israel's illegal blockade on Gaza has severely restricted freedom of movement and the supply of goods, while creating a devastating humanitarian crisis.²

Many have suggested that economic pressure may be a way to prompt Israel to curtail its human rights abuses against Palestinians. There are many ways to accomplish this, including 1) labelling of Israeli settlement products, 2) the exclusion of settlement products from free trade agreements, 3) a prohibition of products from Israeli settlements, or 4) restrictions on trade with Israel itself. Another approach is that suggested by the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, launched in 2005 by Palestinian civil society organizations to apply economic pressure on Israel.³ Canada has failed to impose any economic pressure on Israel to improve its human rights record. Rather, in 2018, the Canadian government introduced a modernized version of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, prolonging preferential trade agreements with Israel.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe Canadians should be free to criticize the Israeli government like any other government?
- Do you believe that Canada should be free to sanction Israel or Israeli actors just as it might sanction other countries or their leaders?
- Given that all diplomatic attempts to get Israel to respect Palestinian human rights have failed for 50 years, do you see any alternative to economic pressure?
- Do you support Canadians' right to express themselves through boycott action?

If elected:

- Will you work within your caucus to defuse false criticisms of economic pressure on Israel, and to raise awareness of the various mechanisms to put economic pressure on Israel?
- Will you consider making a statement in the House in support of economic pressure on Israel?

Supporting Points

- **International Law and the UN Position.** There is no international law against using economic pressure to affect political or social change. With the BDS movement, for example, each of its three demands align fully with international law. Economic boycotts and sanctions are an effective and non-violent means of pressuring Israel to comply with international law. With the BDS movement, once Israel ends its occupation and recognizes the fundamental rights of Palestinians, the movement will come to an end. This is the exact type of economic pressure called for by Resolution 2334, passed by the UN General Assembly in 2016. The Resolution calls upon all states to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.⁴
- **Actions by Canadian Allies.** Economic pressure mechanisms have come to be an increasingly popular tool of foreign policy, with many countries putting forth bills to ban settlement-made products. The European Commission, for example, requires that Israeli producers explicitly label goods that come from Israeli “settlements” if they are to be sold in the EU.⁵ Ireland has gone even further, and passed a bill that would ban the purchase of all goods and services from Israel’s West Bank settlements.⁶
- **Canada’s Official Position.** The Canadian government has long used economic sanctions as a means of punishing states which have violated international law. Economic sanctions have been used to advance a range of foreign policy goals, such as conflict resolution and the promotion of democracy and human rights. Canada currently has economic sanctions on nineteen different states and/or their citizens.⁷ For example, the government imposed strict economic sanctions on Russia following its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. In this case, Russia’s violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity warranted the imposition of economic sanctions. Canada, however, has *never* imposed economic sanctions against Israel for its illegal annexation and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the newly-negotiated Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) allows for the application of preferential tariffs on Israeli products produced in the occupied Palestinian territories. This treatment confers *de facto* legitimacy to Israeli “settlements,” enables their economic growth, and contributes to their permanence – all contrary to official Canadian policy on Israeli “settlements.” CIFTA also fails to require the proper labeling of Israeli products made in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Recommendations for Canada

- Canadian leaders should consider imposing economic sanctions on Israel until Palestinian human rights are respected. Such an initiative could begin with the labelling of “settlement” products, and move to progressively harsher steps if Israel continues to refuse to respect the rights of Palestinians.

- The Canadian government should condition free trade with Israel on 1) the improvement of Israel's human rights record in the occupied Palestinian territories, and 2) the equal rights and civil liberties of minorities in Israel itself.
- Canadian leaders should refrain from disparaging the use of economic pressure tactics against Israel, and should instead reflect on the movements' grassroots popularity and successes.

1.2 Oppose Israel's Illegal "Settlements"

Overview

During the 1967 war, Israel invaded and militarily occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Over 50 years later, Israel still maintains a permanent occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and a *de facto* occupation of Gaza. Since 1967, in violation of international law, Israel has been colonizing the West Bank and East Jerusalem with Jewish Israelis. Israel calls these colonies "settlements," and to date, there are now 620,000 Jewish Israelis in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.⁸ Some of these colonies are small cities: for example, the settlement of Ariel has 20,000 residents, a university and an industrial zone.⁹ Despite international condemnation, Israel's settlement enterprise has gone on continuously since 1967.

According to the UN, the West Bank and Gaza should be the basis for a future Palestinian state. Of course, the presence and continued expansion of Israeli settlements represent a serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Canada's official policy on Israel-Palestine states that the "settlements" constitute a serious obstacle to peace. That being said, the Canadian government rarely condemns Israel's illegal settlements, and even has a free trade agreement with Israel which encompasses Israel's settlements.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that Palestinians should enjoy the same human rights as other peoples?
- Do you believe that Canada should speak out in support of its own official foreign policy positions?
- Do you believe that Israel should be held to its obligations as a signatory to the Fourth Geneva Convention?

If elected:

- Will you consider making a statement in the House condemning Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories?
- Will you work within caucus to raise awareness of the human rights abuses suffered by Palestinians under Israeli occupation?

Supporting Points

- **International Law and the UN Position.** There is wide international consensus within the international community that Israeli settlements are illegal and constitute a flagrant violation of international law. Legally, the Palestinian territories are considered "occupied territory," and are thus subject to the stipulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Article 49 of the Convention states that an occupier may not transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied territory. This view has been supported by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), numerous UN Resolutions, and reiterated by

several UN bodies. For example, UN Security Council Resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980) both state that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In 2016, the Security Council passed Resolution 2334, which reiterated its demand that Israel immediately cease all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories.¹⁰ The International Court of Justice, also concluded that Israel violated its obligations under international law by constructing settlements and a barrier wall in the occupied territories.¹¹ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has also called for an immediate cessation and reversal of all Israeli settlements in the illegally occupied territories.

- **Canada's Official Position.** In keeping with the principles of international law, Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the Golan Heights, the West Bank, Gaza Strip or East Jerusalem. The Canadian government recognizes the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, and acknowledges Israel's obligations as an occupying power. Official government policy states clearly that the illegal settlements represent an obstacle to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.¹²
- **The Need for Urgency.** Many international leaders have suggested that, as a result of Israel's illegal settlement activities, the "two state solution" is no longer a viable option in Israel-Palestine. Data collected by Peace Now in 2018 revealed the highest level of settlement planning by Israel seen since 2013.¹³

Recommendations for Canada

- Canadian leaders must do their part to oppose the construction of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. Canadian politicians must loudly condemn the settlement enterprise, and underscore that these settlements are a major impediment to peace.
- In the absence of leadership from Washington, Canada should take initiative and work with allies to facilitate a just peace in Israel-Palestine.

1.3 Balance Canada's Voting Record on Palestine-Israel at the UN

Overview

The General Assembly is the main policymaking organ of the United Nations, in which all 193 UN member states participate in multilateral discussions of international issues. The question of Palestine and related issues have been the subject of numerous resolutions adopted by the Assembly. In fact, every year, there are at least 16 General Assembly resolutions passed on the question of Palestine. These resolutions seek to affirm the right of Palestinians to self-determination, their sovereignty over natural resources, the illegality of Israeli settlements, and so forth.

In addition to these 16 recurrent resolutions, the General Assembly also occasionally votes on other issues pertaining to Palestine. For example, in 2012, the General Assembly voted in favour of a resolution to accord Palestine non-member observer state status in the UN.¹⁴ Additionally, in 2017, following a decision by the United States to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, an emergency session at the General Assembly was held. Member nations voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution reiterating that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations.¹⁵ Especially since 2011, Canada's voting at the UN seems intended to shield Israel from criticism for its human rights abuses against Palestinians. This pattern runs counter to Canada's own official policy on Israel-Palestine. This pattern also puts Canada in a small losing minority at the UN.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that it is important for Canada to promote human rights at the UN?
- Do you believe that UN General Assembly resolutions are significant to the Israel-Palestine peace process?
- Do you believe that Canada should vote in the General Assembly in accordance with its own official foreign policy?
- Do you believe that the international community has a shared responsibility to advance peace in Israel-Palestine?

If elected:

- Will you consider encouraging Canada's Permanent Mission to adopt a more balanced and defensible approach to the Question of Palestine at the UN?
- Will you work within caucus to raise awareness of Canada's contradictory voting record in the UN General Assembly?

Supporting Points

- **International Law and the UN Position.** Each of the resolutions on Palestine passed annually by the General Assembly are rooted in international law. These resolutions frequently cite key pieces of international law, including the Geneva Conventions and

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For example, every year the General Assembly votes on a resolution affirming the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources. In demanding that Israel cease the exploitation and endangerment of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territories, this resolution points to the protections outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It also refers to Israel's obligations as an Occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.¹⁶ In addition to referencing important pieces of international law, these resolutions also frequently reiterate recommendations made by other UN bodies. For example, a resolution is voted on annually by the General Assembly to condemn Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people. This declaration is merely a reiteration of numerous Security Council resolutions, Human Rights Council resolutions, and UN Fact-finding Mission reports.¹⁷ Lastly, the mere fact that these resolutions are passed, year after year, by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly demonstrates the growing international consensus surrounding these issues.

- **Canada's Official Position.** Canada's voting record in the General Assembly runs counter to its own official foreign policy. Despite officially recognizing the Palestinian right to self-determination, Canada has consistently voted against the General Assembly's annual resolution affirming Palestinians' right to self-determination. Furthermore, although Canada does not recognize Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories, it continues to vote against UN resolutions condemning illegal Israeli "settlements." In all, since 2011, Canada has either voted against or abstained on every resolution supporting the rights of Palestinians. It is well-known that the Harper government, while in power from 2006 to 2015, firmly embraced a pro-Israel position. Trudeau has sought to soften some of the rhetorical rough edges around Harper's approach, but continues the UN voting pattern of his predecessor.
- **Action Taken by Canadian Allies.** Canada find itself in a small minority with its voting record on Israel-Palestine, a group including Israel, the US and a handful of Pacific island nations beholden to the US. Canada's Western European allies, however, have taken a more balanced approach rooted in international law. France, Germany, the UK, and other EU nations regularly vote in favor of resolutions on Palestinian human rights.

Recommendations for Canada

- Canada should adjust its voting in the UN General Assembly so as to bring it in line with its own official policy on Israel-Palestine. It should begin by supporting resolutions which 1) condemn illegal Israeli "settlements," 2) support the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, and 3) oppose the illegal annexation of Jerusalem.
- Canadian leaders should work with allies within the UN to advance the Israel-Palestine peace process, rather than counter important resolutions.

2 Foreign Affairs – Military / Arms

2.1 Oppose Israeli and US Assassinations in the Middle East

Overview

An extrajudicial killing – sometimes referred to as “targeted killing” or “assassination” – is defined as “a killing of a person by government authorities or individuals without the sanction of any judicial proceeding or legal process.”¹⁸ An extrajudicial killing may amount to a crime against humanity in specific contexts, and even genocide if they are a part of a collective practice. The right to life is protected under several international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The ICCPR protects the “right to life” and prohibits “any arbitrary killing.”¹⁹ The UDHR, for its part, guarantees the right to a trial, stating, “Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.”²⁰

Extrajudicial killings usually occur when governments target individuals via airstrikes, missile strikes, drone strikes or other mechanisms without attention to those individuals’ legal rights. Often carried out as part of a targeted killing campaign against non-state militant actors, such strikes disregard all due process and frequently kill non-militant civilians out of reckless disregard. Canada has allies which regularly carry out extrajudicial killings: the US carries them out in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Israel carries them out against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2004, for example, an Israeli drone strike killed 8 non-militant Palestinians while seeking to kill a member of Hamas without trial.²¹ Other than one incident in 2004, Canada has not condemned extrajudicial killings in the Middle East whether by US, UK, Israel or other allies.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that even non-state actors have the right to life and judicial due process?
- Do you believe Canada should oppose extrajudicial killings in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world?
- Do you believe that Canada is critical enough of allies’ targeted killings?

If elected:

- Will you work within your caucus to advocate developing an international ban on targeted killings?
- Will you be critically vocal of allies’ extrajudicial killings in violation of international law?
- Will you be outspoken for the right to life and judicial due process for all individuals?

Supporting Points

- **International Law – Individual Rights.** The UDHR enshrines fair trial rights by the presumption of innocence while the ICCPR further ensures “everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law.”²² Israeli extrajudicial executions in Palestinian territories are in violation of the right to life and the right to a fair trial.
- **International Law – International Aggression.** In several situations, US and UK targeted killings in the Middle East are in violation of the UN Charter prohibition against unauthorized use of force in sovereign territory. Notably, US targeted killings in Iraq, Syria and Yemen violate the UN Charter. US and UK military personnel could be prosecuted for killing civilians and risk complicity in alleged war crimes committed in these countries.²³
- **Human Rights Organizations Response.** Israel has a pattern of extrajudicial executions and a disregard for human life. For example, In 2014 Amnesty International documented 19 unlawful targeted killings by Israel in the West Bank.²⁴ American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) have filed a lawsuit challenging the US government’s targeting killing of three US citizens by drone strikes in Yemen far away from any armed conflict zone.²⁵ From 2001 to 2013 there has been at least 8 wedding parties in the Middle East that have been targeted by Western allies drone strikes leaving a high number of civilian casualties.²⁶

Recommendations for Canada

- Canada ought to vocally condemn the use of targeted killings by allies.
- Canada should consider developing an international ban on targeted killings, whether by drones, airstrikes, or missile strikes.
- Canada should establish strict guidelines on the use of drones prior to obtaining its own fleet of drones – slated for 2025.

2.2 Arms Embargo on Israel

Overview

In 2011, the Palestinian BDS National Committee issued a call for a comprehensive military embargo on Israel. The National Committee pointed out that international corporations and governments enable Israel's attacks on Palestinians by supporting its military industry and research facilities.²⁷ Therefore, it called upon governments and other institutions to support ending the exchange of weapons and military technology to and from Israel. This call for an arms embargo has since been supported by major international human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, as well as numerous trade unions and political parties from around the globe.

Israel's military-security industry relies heavily on trade and research collaboration with foreign governments. In fact, the Israeli state is the fifth largest arms producer in the world, and exports approximately 70% of the military goods it produces.²⁸ This means that Israel's ruthless model of securitization and militarized repression is being exported far beyond the borders of Israel-Palestine. Israel also imports a vast amount of weapons and technology from allies abroad. These imported military goods, along with domestically-produced weapons, are then used to commit grave human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories. For example, US-manufactured sniper rifles were used against unarmed Palestinians demonstrating in Gaza.²⁹ There are also numerous reports of Israeli military companies using attacks on Palestinians to test new weapons and technology. These weapons are then marketed as "field-tested" and sold to foreign governments.³⁰ Despite all of this, Canada continues to exchange weapons and military technology with Israel. In 2017, Canada exported \$10 million in weapons and technology to Israel, representing 0.97% of the country's total military exports.³¹

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that it is acceptable for Canada to export arms to a country that consistently violates international law?
- Do you believe that an arms embargo is an effective means of changing a state's behavior?
- Do you believe that purchasing "field-tested" military equipment from a human rights violator inappropriately rewards and legitimizes such violations?

If elected:

- Will you work within caucus to encourage party support for a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel?
- Will you consider making a statement in the House expressing the need for Canada to cease all military and security research cooperation with Israel?

- Will you work within caucus to raise awareness of how Canadian arms transfers contribute to the perpetuation of human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories?

Supporting Points

- **International Law and the UN Position.** There is no international law against using an arms embargo as a means of sanctioning a state. An arms embargo may be applied unilaterally by individual states, or multilaterally through regional and international organizations.³² The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, has the capacity to impose military embargoes upon states in order to restore international peace and security.³³ States are legally obliged to comply with the mandatory embargoes imposed by the Security Council. Since the end of the Cold War, the Security Council has imposed mandatory arms embargoes in more than 20 states.³⁴ To date, no UNSC resolution has called for an embargo on Israel for its violations of international law. Other UN bodies, however, have encouraged states to impose an arms embargo on Israel. For example, UN General Assembly resolution ES-9/1 (1982) called upon all member states to refrain from supplying or acquiring any weapons from Israel.³⁵ UN General Assembly resolution 3414 (1975) requested that all states desist from supplying Israel with any military aid as long as it continues to occupy Arab territories and deny the Palestinian people their rights.³⁶ The UN Human Rights Council also adopted a resolution in 2018 which called upon all states to ensure that they were not providing arms that could be used by Israel to commit serious violations of international human rights law.³⁷
- **Canada's Official Position.** Within Canada, an arms embargo may be imposed under the *United Nations Act* or the *Special Economic Measures Act*. The former enables the government to apply embargoes passed by the United Nations Security Council. Absent a UNSC resolution, the *Special Economic Measures Act* allows Canada to unilaterally impose sanctions on a foreign state. This Act dictates that an embargo may be imposed on a state in which there are gross and systematic human rights violations being committed, or where a grave breach of international peace and security has occurred.³⁸ Despite ample evidence of gross and systematic human rights violations against Palestinians, the Canadian government has never imposed an arms embargo on Israel under the *Special Measures Act*. Currently, Canada applies a military embargo to 14 different countries. Four of these embargoes are imposed unilaterally by Canada, whereas the rest are UN-mandated.³⁹ The Green Party of Canada is the only political party whose official platform supports the imposition of an arms embargo on Israel.⁴⁰
- **Canada's Allies Take Action.** Political parties and representatives in other Western countries have been considerably more vocal about the need for an arms embargo on Israel. Britain's main opposition, the Labour Party, passed a party resolution in 2018 pledging to halt all weapon sales to Israel if they are elected.⁴¹ The City of Barcelona, as

well as the City of Dublin, both endorsed the call for a comprehensive military embargo on Israel.⁴² In late 2018, Ireland's Minister of State and fifty other lawmakers published a letter calling on the Irish government to end its arms sales to Israel.⁴³

Recommendations for Canada

- Canadian leaders should consider imposing an arms embargo on Israel under the *Special Economic Measures Act* until Palestinian human rights are respected and it ends its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories. Until then, Canada should not be providing Israel with weapons or military technology, for this merely implicates Canada in the perpetuation of Israel's human rights abuses. (Canada's arms exports to Israel account for only 0.97% of Canada's overall military exports.) In this same vein, the Canadian government should not purchase military goods from Israel, for this amounts to economic support of their occupation forces.
- Canadian leaders should work closely with Western allies to impose an arms embargo. As was seen with the UN-mandated sanctions on South Africa in the 1970s, a multilateral arms embargo is more effective than a unilateral embargo.

3 Foreign Affairs – Humanitarian

3.1 Support for Tarek Loubani's Project for Solar Panels for Gaza Hospital

Overview

Palestinian-Canadian Dr. Tarek Loubani was shot in both legs by an Israeli sniper in June 2018 while treating Palestinian victims of Israeli sniper fire during demonstrations in Gaza. Dr. Loubani often travels to Gaza to provide medical services. After his recovery and return to Canada, he met with Prime Minister Trudeau and other MPs. In these meetings, Loubani asked for \$15 million from the Canadian government to support an initiative to install solar panels on the roofs of hospitals and medical clinics in Gaza to provide emergency power for public health facilities.

Because of Israel's withholding of fuel, the population of Gaza endures frequent and lengthy power outages, often lasting more than 16 hours a day. Patients in hospitals are especially vulnerable, where the availability of power can mean the difference between life and death. The "EmpowerGAZA" project – a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Islamic Relief Canada – has already saved lives by providing solar panels to hospitals in Gaza. A Canadian contribution of \$15 million will provide reliable and green energy much more broadly, 24 hours a day to emergency rooms, intensive care units, and operating theatres.⁴⁴ Solar power could make hospitals self-reliant and would provide power to Gaza hospitals in an environmentally sustainable way.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that the Palestinians of Gaza have the right to health?
- Do you believe that Israel has the right to prevent fuel from getting to electric generators in Gaza?
- Do you believe that Canada should do more to assist civilians living in Gaza to become self-sufficient?

If elected:

- Will you work within your caucus to generate support for Dr. Loubani's solar panel project?
- Will you encourage the government to support the \$15 million proposal to fund the solar panel project?
- Will you promote discussion within your caucus on the need for a long-term solution to end the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Supporting Points

- **The EmpowerGAZA Pilot Project.** Beginning in 2015, the EmpowerGAZA pilot project was launched to bring solar power to four Gaza hospitals. The project has proven highly effective, outfitting the al-Shifa Hospital – Gaza’s largest healthcare facility – with the required solar panels. According to Dr. Loubani, what makes the project special is that “it is by Palestinians and for Palestinians, to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of Gaza’s sickest patients.”⁴⁵
- **International Law.** Israel’s blockade of Gaza has been declared “collective punishment” – illegal under international law – by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁴⁶ While many in the international community have condemned Israel’s illegal blockade⁴⁷, in place since 2006, it continues unabated and average Palestinians are forced to cope with limited fuel, food, medicine, supplies and mobility. The solar panel project requested by Loubani will not end Israel’s human rights abuses, but it will help the most vulnerable of Gaza’s population.
- **Canada’s Commitment.** Canada’s ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories, and that Israel must ensure the humane treatment of Palestinians in Gaza.⁴⁸ By blockading and damaging Gaza health infrastructure, Israel violates the Fourth Geneva Convention which requires that civilians be allowed access to medical care. As a signatory to the Convention, Canada should provide the requested humanitarian assistance to give Palestinians access to health care.

Recommendations for Canada

- As long as Israel maintains its military occupation of Palestinian territory, Canada should contribute to humanitarian initiatives which protect the most vulnerable Palestinians.
- Canada must be vocal in calling for a cessation to the Israeli blockade of Gaza to allow the flow of medical supplies, aid shipments, and infrastructure supplies into Gaza.
- Canada should make clear its long-term commitment to the millions of Palestinians living under military occupation for more than 50 years.

3.2 Greater Canadian Funding to UNRWA for Palestinian Refugees

Overview

The UN aid agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) was created in 1949 to accommodate the 750,000 Palestinians expelled from their homes by Israel between 1947 and 1949. In the absence of a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, generations of Palestinian refugees have been born stateless and still live their lives in limbo today. UNRWA currently serves over 5.4 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East. UNRWA's budget of \$1.2 billion⁴⁹ goes to running schools (54%), health services (17%), and social and support services (25%).

UNRWA provides hope and basic services to millions of refugees whose needs would otherwise be unmet. In 2018, the Trump administration ended its support for UNRWA which had historically accounted for about 1/3 of UNRWA's budget. The UN has asked member states to fill the critical funding gap. While the Harper government stopped all funding to UNRWA in 2009, the Trudeau government restarted annual contributions in 2016, and has also responded to UNRWA's recent pleas for emergency.

Questions for Federal Candidates

- Do you believe that Palestinians refugees should enjoy the same human protections and rights as other refugees around the world?
- Do you believe that Canada should join its allies in helping bridge the funding gap for UNRWA?
- Do you believe that Canada should provide leadership in global humanitarian crises?

If elected:

- Will you support additional Canadian funding for UNRWA?
- Will you work within your caucus to raise awareness of the vulnerability of Palestinian refugees?
- Will you join the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Association?

Supporting Points

- **Humanitarian Concern.** Trump's decision to end US funding to UNRWA risks leaving the most vulnerable Palestinians without support for their basic needs. Without greater international support, UNRWA will be unable to cover the cost to keep schools open as well as providing healthcare and food aid for over 5.4 million Palestinian refugees. Trump's decision creates an unprecedented politicisation of aid which risks worsening a dire situation for Palestinian refugees.
- **Canada's Funding Record.** In 2009 the Harper government stopped all funding for UNRWA until the Trudeau government restored funding in 2016. In 2009, Canada was 11th on the donor list for UNRWA; donating a total of \$18 million.⁵⁰ With the Trudeau

government UNRWA contributions of \$25 million CAD starting in 2016 puts Canada back at 11th on the donor list.⁵¹ In 2018, the Minister of International development, Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced \$50 million CAD over two years for UNWRA⁵². However, the funds are not growing with the need to fill the critical funding gap created by the Trump administration.

- **Canada's Potential for Leadership.** Canada is the longstanding gavel-holder for the Refugee Working Group. Therefore, Canada has an international responsibility to lead the effort to find a long-term solution for Palestinian refugees and to ensure Palestinians refugees do not become destitute in the interim. Palestinian refugees constitute the world's largest and most long-standing refugee population.⁵³

Recommendations for Canada

- In the absence of leadership from the U.S., Canada should join allies to address the urgent humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees.
- The Canadian government should join its allies and increase its UNRWA funding to help fill the organization's funding gap.
- As the gavel-holder for the Refugee Working Group, Canada should work with its allies to initiate practical discussions about long- and short-term solutions for Palestinian refugees.

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