

*Canadians for Justice and Peace
in the Middle East*
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Mar. 29, 2016

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Trudeau,

I am writing to you and Mr. Dion to ask you either to:

- 1) Start condemning Canadians for promoting BDS, as required under the Parliamentary motion that passed on Feb. 22nd, or
- 2) Renounce this absurd and insulting motion.

If you choose the first option above, I attach a list of over 3000 Canadians who must be condemned “individually” as per this motion. Each of these Canadians signed a petition asking (http://cjpme.org/condemn_me) “to be individually condemned for, as appropriate, [their] thoughts, words, and actions, promoting BDS.”

As Mr. Dion represented the government in the Parliamentary debate on the motion in February, I have written a more detailed letter to him highlighting my differences with his public statements, and why I feel that the motion of Feb. 22nd runs counter to Canadians’ Charter rights. I attach a copy for your convenience.

In my letter to Mr. Dion, I suggest that if you choose option one above – to start condemning Canadians for exercising their freedom of expression – then I am perhaps the first person you will need to condemn. I am the leader of a non-profit organization – Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) – which has over 100,000 adherents, which has supported and promoted the BDS movement in Canada for years. I attach photos of myself to make my implication in this movement extremely vivid. We in CJPME believe that, as per the stated objectives of the movement,¹ BDS is a democratic and non-violent means of pressuring Israel to respect the human rights of Palestinians.

In my letter to Dion, I point out how – apart from the attack on Canadians’ freedom of expression – Dion’s arguments against BDS are naïve and disingenuous. His comments ignore that the fact that the Israeli Prime Minister was elected in 2015 after promising to never allow the Palestinians to establish their own state. Dion’s comments about “dialogue,” “building bridges” and “interaction” mirror those from recent right-wing Israeli documents dedicated to “defeat[ing] BDS.” The catch-phrases that Dion aped are not designed to promote peace, coexistence, or justice between Israelis and Palestinians, but rather are shrewd slogans developed by Israeli public relations experts seeking to snuff out the BDS movement.

In my letter to you in February, I pointed out how the objectives of BDS align fully with Canada’s stated objectives on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. While people may disagree on how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, everyone agrees that Israel’s colonies (a.k.a. “settlements”) in Palestinian territory are counterproductive to peace and a resolution to the conflict. Israeli business that set up shop in these colonies are among the worst human rights offenders, as they entrench and enable this illegal colonization. In my letter to Dion, I cite a

Human Rights Watch report from January on Israeli colonist businesses in the West Bank which is scathing in its critique. Such illegal and exploitative businesses are BDS's first targets.

To Dion's arguments that "settlement" business "help" Palestinians, I refer to a 2013 World Bank report that shows that Palestine's economy would expand by \$3.4 billion if Israel would simply loosen its occupation.

Finally, in my letter to Dion, I point out how effective the BDS movement has been – with examples of how just recently, Ahava, SodaStream and other businesses have ceased their illegal commerce in the Palestinian territories. BDS is working: Israel isn't being destroyed or "delegitimized," but the leaders of its companies are reflecting on their activities and changing their behaviour – exactly as anticipated by the visionaries of the BDS movement.

I have attached a factsheet my organization produced entitled, "BDS: Informing the Parliamentary Debate."² This pamphlet presents the documented objectives of BDS, and debunks the hearsay and innuendo introduced during the Parliamentary "debate." It also demonstrates how the objectives of BDS align perfectly with Canada's stated positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and international law. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the actual demands of the BDS movement with you, so that you judge for yourself whether the allegations made against it have any merit.

For the moment, however, the options for you and Mr. Dion remain, either:

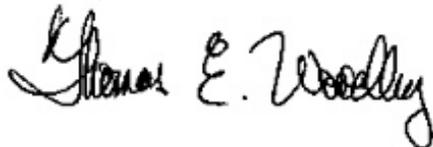
- 1) Start condemning Canadians for promoting BDS, as required under the Parliamentary motion that passed on Feb. 22nd, or
- 2) Renounce this absurd and insulting motion.

If you believe in the motion that you voted for on Feb. 22nd, then please carry out the required condemnations – of me and the other 3000 Canadians who stand proudly for the human rights of dispossessed peoples. If you're not going to carry out the condemnations, then show some spine and renounce the anti-BDS motion. If you do neither, then you prove that the goal of the motion was simply to intimidate critics of Israel, or worse, to score a few political points at the expense of our right to free speech.

Please note that I have forwarded a copy of this letter and its attachments to all of the Canadian media that expressed an interest in the motion in February, including the CBC, the Globe and Mail and others.

We have placed a counter on our Website (www.cjpme.org), counting the hours and minutes since the passage of your anti-BDS motion. With every day, hour and minute that passes without a response from you, the absurdity and offensiveness of the anti-BDS motion and its assault on our Charter right to free expression become ever more clear.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Woodley
President, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

¹ "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," Palestinian BDS National Committee, <http://bdsmovement.net/call> accessed Mar. 20, 2016

² "BDS: Informing the Parliamentary Debate," CJPME, February, 2016, http://www.cjpme.org/fs_196 accessed Mar. 20, 2016