

CJPME's Vote 2021 Elections Guide

A GUIDE TO CANADIAN FEDERAL PARTIES' POSITIONS
ON THE MIDDLE EAST

«Vote 2021» Guide électoral de CJPMO

GUIDE SUR LA POSITION DES PARTIS FÉDÉRAUX CANADIENS
À PROPOS DU MOYEN-ORIENT

PREPARED BY

CANADIANS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST,
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Preface

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is pleased to provide the present guide on Canadian federal parties' positions on the Middle East.

It has been less than two years since the last federal election in 2019. This guide focuses on ten core Middle East issues, chosen because they were either debated by the parties, or because they were priorities for CJPME in this two-year period. To see where the parties stand on many other issues, please reference CJPME's Election Guides for previous years.

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. We provide this document so that you – a Canadian citizen or resident – can be better informed of the parties' positions on key Middle East-related topics.

We know that Middle East-related issues are not your only concerns, but we believe that you will want to take them into consideration when deciding whom you will support. In some ridings, the votes in the 2019 election were very close. Our hope is that this election guide will encourage you to participate in the upcoming election.

Préface

Canadiens pour la paix et la justice au Moyen-Orient (CJPMO) est heureuse de vous présenter ce guide électoral portant sur les positions adoptées par les fédéraux canadiens sur le Moyen-Orient.

Moins de deux ans se sont écoulés depuis les élections fédérales en 2019. Ce guide se concentre sur dix enjeux clés du Moyen-Orient. Ces questions ont été choisies soit parce qu'elles ont été débattues par les différents partis, ou parce qu'elles ont fait partie des priorités de CJPMO ces deux dernières années. Pour connaître la position des partis sur de nombreuses autres questions, veuillez consulter les guides électoraux de CJPMO des années précédentes.

CJPMO est une organisation de terrain non-partisane et séculière visant à donner aux Canadiens de tous horizons les moyens de promouvoir la justice, le développement et la paix au Moyen-Orient. Nous offrons ce document afin que vous – en tant que citoyen ou résident canadien – puissiez être bien informés sur l'importance et sur l'impact de votre vote lors de l'élection fédérale 2021.

Nous savons que les enjeux liés au Moyen-Orient ne sont pas votre seule préoccupation, mais que vous voudrez les prendre en considération lorsqu'il s'agira de décider à qui vous donnerez votre appui. Dans certaines circonscriptions, le vote lors de l'élection de 2019 était très serré. Nous espérons que ce guide électoral vous encouragera à participer aux prochaines élections.

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Summary Ratings / Sommaire des notations

	Liberals <i>Libéraux</i>	Conservatives <i>Conservateurs</i>	NDP <i>NPD</i>	Bloc Québécois	Greens Verts
1. Israeli Annexation of Palestinian Land Annexion par Israël des terres palestiniennes	C-	D	A-	A-	A
2. Israel's Crimes of Apartheid Crimes d'apartheid d'Israël	F	F	B-	D	C-
3. Escalation of Israeli Violence, May 2021 Escalade des violences israéliennes, mai 2021	C	F	A	B-	B-
4. Canada's Voting at the United Nations Votes du Canada aux Nations unies	D+	F	B	n/a – n.d.	n/a – n.d.
5. ICC Investigation of War Crimes in Palestine Enquête de la CPI sur les crimes de guerre en Palestine	D+	F	B+	C	B-
6. Canada's Aid to Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Aide du Canada aux réfugiés palestiniens (UNRWA)	B+	F	A	B	B
7. Free Speech on Palestine Liberté d'expression sur la Palestine	F	F	B+	B-	B
8. Canada's Response to Islamophobia Réponse du Canada à l'islamophobie	B	D-	A-	F	B
9. Canada's Arms Trade and the Saudi Arms Deal Commerce des armes au Canada et vente d'armes à l'Arabie saoudite	C-	F	A	A	A
10. Nuclear Arms and the Middle East Armes nucléaires et Moyen-Orient	F	F	A	A	A
CJPME Summary Evaluation Résumé de l'évaluation de CJPMO	C-	F	A-	B-	B

Scope of Analysis

Portée de l'analyse

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) has evaluated each of the Canadian parties, on each of the target topics, according to certain criteria. These criteria involve, foremost, CJPME's core policy pillars: 1) support for international law; 2) an equal legal standard for all; and 3) a belief that violence doesn't lead to solutions. In addition to the above three criteria, there are a few other criteria which have been brought to bear where appropriate in this analysis, including: 4) humanitarian concern; 5) support for representative governance; and 6) sense of urgency in responding to crises. There is also the underlying assumption in this Guide that Canada is a wealthy and privileged nation, and that Canada has a responsibility to contribute constructively (and financially) to humanitarian, political and diplomatic crises around the world.

This Guide has its limitations. CJPME has limited resources to conduct such analysis. As such, CJPME asks for indulgence with regards to 1) potential oversights in its analysis; and 2) the limited number of topics we were able to address.

Additionally, due to resource constraints, this Guide focuses on the positions of main federal parties with at least one seat in Parliament. When of interest, CJPME will post additional information about smaller parties on our Election Tracker webpage: www.cjpme.org/election_tracker_2021

While certain trends are clear, CJPME does not offer this Guide as a recipe book for voting. Individual Canadian voters must decide how to vote based on many factors, especially including the specifics of their local riding and candidates. Nevertheless, CJPME hopes that this Guide will provide strong overall guidance on how parties have responded to key Middle East crises of the past few years, and how these same parties might respond in the future.

Canadiens pour la justice et la paix au Moyen-Orient (CJPMO) a évalué chacun des partis canadiens, sur chacun des enjeux clés, en fonction de certains critères. Ces critères reposent avant tout sur les principes politiques fondamentaux de CJPMO : 1) le respect du droit international, 2) le statut égal aux yeux de la loi pour tous, 3) la conviction que la violence n'est pas une solution. De plus, d'autres critères jugés appropriés pour cette analyse ont été ajoutés, comme : 4) un souci humanitaire, 5) un appui envers la démocratie représentative, et 6) un sentiment d'urgence à répondre à une crise. Ce guide prend aussi sur soi que le Canada est une nation privilégiée et fortunée qui a comme responsabilité de contribuer de manière constructive (et financière) aux crises humanitaires, politiques et diplomatiques qui sévissent dans le monde.

Les limitations de ce guide s'expliquent par les ressources comptées dont bénéficie CJPMO pour la mise en œuvre de telles analyses. C'est pourquoi CJPMO demande à ses lecteurs de faire preuve d'indulgence en ce qui a trait 1) aux omissions potentielles dans son analyse et 2) à la quantité limitée de sujets qui ont pu être couverts.




De plus, dû au manque de ressources, ce guide se concentre sur les positions des partis fédéraux principaux avec au moins un siège au Parlement. Lorsque pertinent, CJPMO publiera des informations supplémentaires sur de plus petits partis sur notre page web sur les élections : www.cjpme.org/election_tracker_2021

Même si certaines tendances sont décelables, CJPMO n'offre pas ce guide à titre de manuel d'emploi pour voter. Les électeurs canadiens doivent prendre en compte plusieurs facteurs lors du vote, comme les particularités de leur circonscription et les candidats présentés. Néanmoins, CJPMO espère que ce guide fournira un bon aperçu des politiques prônées par chacun des partis lors des crises relatives au Moyen-Orient survenues durant les dernières années, et permettra de prédire les lignes de conduite potentielles des partis. La vocation de ce guide est d'être un manuel d'aide aux électeurs pour leur permettre de remettre en question leurs élus durant les mois et les années à venir.

1 Israeli Annexation of Palestinian Land / Annexion par Israël des terres palestiniennes

ISRAELI ANNEXATION ANNEXION PAR ISRAËL DES TERRES PALESTINIENNES

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	C-
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	D
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A-
 Bloc Québécois	A-
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	A

Executive Summary

None of Canada's federal parties supported Israel's plans to annex parts of the West Bank in the first half of 2020, but some parties took the issue more seriously than others.

The Liberal government was relatively muted in its disagreement about the issue, especially compared to European countries, and avoided directly criticizing either Israel or Trump's greenlight to annexation. A handful of Liberal MPs signed the MP pledge to oppose annexation.

The Conservatives also quietly expressed disagreement with annexation of the West Bank, but this position is contradicted by their promise to recognize Israel's annexation of East

Sommaire exécutif

Aucun des partis fédéraux du Canada n'a soutenu les plans israéliens pour annexer des parties de la Cisjordanie durant la première partie de 2020, mais certains partis ont pris la question plus au sérieux que d'autres.

Le gouvernement libéral a été relativement discret dans son désaccord sur la question, surtout par rapport aux pays européens, et a évité de critiquer directement Israël ou le feu vert de Trump à l'annexion. Une poignée de députés libéraux ont signé l'engagement des députés à s'opposer à l'annexion.

Les conservateurs ont également exprimé discrètement leur désaccord avec l'annexion de

Jerusalem. Not a single Conservative MP signed the MP pledge to oppose annexation.

The other parties were much more proactive. The NDP was very vocal in its opposition to annexation, and urged the government to pressure Israel, but did not suggest any specific actions. All but two of the NDP MPs signed the MP pledge to oppose annexation, but one of the two who refused was NDP leader Jagmeet Singh. The Bloc was less vocal, but its entire caucus signed the MP pledge to oppose annexation.

The Green Party's opposition to Israeli annexation was notable in that all three caucus members signed the anti-annexation pledge, and the party called for sanctions on Israeli officials if annexation went ahead. (Note: These actions by the Greens took place prior to the leadership of Annamie Paul, who refused to talk about specific measures to stop annexation during her campaign and refused to sign the pledge).

la Cisjordanie, mais leur position est contradictoire avec leur promesse de reconnaître l'annexion de Jérusalem-Est par Israël. Pas un seul député conservateur n'a signé l'engagement des députés à s'opposer à l'annexion.

Les autres partis étaient beaucoup plus proactifs. Le NPD a exprimé très clairement son opposition à l'annexion et a exhorté le gouvernement à faire pression sur Israël, mais n'a pas proposé d'actions spécifiques. Tous les députés néo-démocrates, sauf deux, ont signé l'engagement des députés à s'opposer à l'annexion. Mais l'un des deux seuls députés qui a refusé est le chef du parti, Jagmeet Singh. Le Bloc a été moins bruyant, mais tout son caucus a signé l'engagement des députés à s'opposer à l'annexion.

L'opposition du Parti vert aux annexions d'Israël est remarquable dans la mesure où les trois membres du caucus ont signé l'engagement contre l'annexion, et où le parti a appelé à des sanctions contre les responsables israéliens si l'annexion se poursuit. (Remarque : Ses actions ont été prises avant qu'Annamie Paul prenne la direction du parti. Annamie Paul, qui a refusé de parler de mesures spécifiques pour arrêter l'annexion pendant sa campagne, a refusé de signer l'engagement).

Background

In late 2019 and until the middle of 2020, the Israeli government was threatening to formally annex significant portions of the occupied West Bank, including the Jordan Valley. This movement was happening in parallel with the release of US President Donald Trump's so-called "Deal of the Century," unveiled in early 2020, which endorsed Israel's annexation threats. It also followed decisions by Trump to recognize Israeli sovereignty over (and therefore approve the annexation of) East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Israel's intentions to annex the West Bank sparked international condemnation and concern leading up to July 2020, which the new Israeli government had indicated as a window for moving ahead with its annexation plans. The European Union, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, and many other European countries were vocal in their condemnation of Israel's plans,¹ and the European Union was openly contemplating the possibility of imposing sanctions on Israel if annexation was to move ahead.²

To build Canadian parliamentary opposition to Israel's plans, CJPME and other civil society groups launched a campaign asking MPs to sign a pledge against annexation, which read the following:

As a Member of Parliament, I understand that Canada has a responsibility to stand up for international law and human rights. For this reason, the Canadian government must show meaningful opposition to the annexation plans recently announced by Israeli leaders. I call on the Canadian government to consider all reasonable diplomatic and economic options to stop annexation and prompt Israeli compliance with international law.³

The pledge was ultimately signed by 68 MPs from four political parties and endorsed by more than 60 civil society groups.⁴

In the face of international opposition, the Israeli government decided not to move forward with formal annexation, and Netanyahu instead focused on brokering normalization agreements with various countries in the region.⁵ However, formal annexation remains a significant threat. The Likud party, now in opposition, recently tried to pass a motion to annex the West Bank.⁶ Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is a long-time proponent of annexing parts of the West Bank, but he may be restrained from acting on it in the foreseeable future, due to a coalition agreement which discourages making any controversial or political decisions in relation to the Palestinians.⁷

Liberal Party

In contrast with the loud condemnations from governments across Europe, Canada's Liberal government was relatively muted on the issue of Israel's annexation plans,⁸ and only mentioned it when directly asked or in response to criticism. At no point did the government propose any action or consequence if annexation went ahead.

Justin Trudeau first told a reporter on June 2, 2020 that he had "deep concerns and disagreement" over Israel's annexation plans.⁹ A Global Affairs spokesperson told the CBC that "Canada is very concerned that Israel moving forward with unilateral annexation would be damaging to peace negotiations and contrary to international law,"¹⁰ and a letter from Canada's UN Ambassador to UN member states stated that "Canada views any unilateral annexation of parts of the West Bank as contrary to international law."¹¹

In general, the Liberal government has maintained a similar position -- of muted disagreement -- in response to various announcements by US President Trump recognizing Israeli sovereignty over occupied territory. In response to Trump's decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem in late 2017, the Liberal government quietly disagreed.¹² In March 2019, the government issued a statement opposing the Trump administration's recognition of Israel's annexation the Golan Heights, saying "annexation of territory by force is prohibited under International Law."¹³

When Trump released his "Deal of the Century" plan in January 2020, which had endorsed Israel's goals of annexation, Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne issued a short statement noting only that Canada "will carefully examine the details of the U.S. initiative for the Middle East peace process," and emphasized Canada's commitment to a two-state solution.¹⁴ The Liberal government's statement did not contradict or push back against any of Trump's claims or ideas, even implicitly, given

that Trump himself had misleadingly described this plan as consistent with a two-state solution. The result was a neutral statement with no positive or negative content.

When Israel put its annexation plans on hold in exchange for a normalization agreement with the UAE, Champagne paradoxically greeted it as an “historic and positive step toward peace and security in the region,” and noted that Canada was “pleased that the Israeli government has announced its decision to suspend the annexation of parts of the West Bank.”¹⁵

Only 10 Liberal MPs at the time signed the MP pledge to oppose Israeli annexation. These include Wayne Long, Adam Van Koeverden, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Salma Zahid, Yasmin Ratansi (now Independent), Mark Holland, Arif Verani, Ken Hardie, Jennifer O’Connell, and Iqra Khalid.¹⁶ Several other Liberal MPs reiterated their government’s muted response on annexation, but without calling for action or consequences.

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party has taken a contradictory approach to Israeli annexation. Following Trump’s decision in 2017 to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, which effectively endorsed Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem, Conservative leader Andrew Scheer vowed to follow suit and relocate Canada’s Embassy as well. A 2018 petition said that “Conservatives recognize the obvious fact that Israel, like every other sovereign nation, has a right to determine where its capital is located.”¹⁷ This was an important foreign policy promise for the party, leading up to the 2019 federal election campaign.¹⁸ Since before and after being elected as the party’s new leader, Erin O’Toole has reiterated his support for this policy.¹⁹

When it came to Israel’s plans to annex parts of the West Bank in 2020, however, the party chose not to offer their support. Under Scheer, the party’s foreign policy critic Leona Alleslev told the CBC only that “Conservatives continue to believe in the two-state solution, as part of a negotiated settlement to this conflict, as well as the right of Israel to defend itself and secure its borders.”²⁰ O’Toole, then a leadership candidate, said that he does not support “any unilateral action,” including “the Israelis annexing disputed territory.”²¹ Since then, statements from the party about Israel have been devoid of any mention of annexation or settlement activity.

Not a single Conservative MP signed the MP pledge to oppose Israeli annexation.

New Democratic Party

The NDP has been outspoken against Israeli annexation, but prior to the events of May 2021 the party never went as far as to propose a specific response beyond condemnation.

When Trump first announced the decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh called it “divisive” and “counter-productive,” and foreign affairs critic Hélène Laverdière “urge[d] Canada to condemn this decision in the strongest of terms.”²² When Trump recognized Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights, Singh called the move “reckless” and “contrary to international law” while urging the Trudeau government to condemn the move.²³ Foreign affairs critic Guy Caron similarly issued a statement calling on Canada to “condemn this decision and formally démarche the American government.”²⁴

When Israel moved closer to annexing the West Bank in 2020, NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris strongly condemned the move and criticized Canada's weak response. "It is not enough for Canada to simply express its concern or denounce the Israeli government's annexation plans," Harris said, but Canada "must take action with other nations to uphold International Law and the Human Rights of the Palestinian people." The statement urged Canada to "dissuade" the Israeli government and encourage new negotiations with the Palestinians.²⁵ NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice also said that "Canada has a responsibility to condemn" annexation plans, that that "we cannot stand by while a country steals someone else's territory by force," noting the sanctions that Canada took in response to Russia's actions in Crimea."²⁶

22 out of the 24 NDP MPs signed the MP pledge to oppose Israeli annexation. Notably, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh ignored requests to sign the pledge, and MP Randall Garrison declined to sign it.

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc has occasionally expressed its firm opposition to Israeli annexation. The party leadership appears to be open to sanctions as a possible response to Israel's actions, but has not directly advocated this position.

In 2018, Bloc MP Gabriel Ste-Marie pushed to exclude Israeli settlements from the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, noting that to include the settlements would be "in some way recognizing that the occupied territories actually belong to Israel."²⁷ This was reaffirmed in a response to a questionnaire during the current election.²⁸

In May 2020, Stéphane Bergeron pressed Conservative MPs on why they haven't condemned Israel's annexation plans, and noted that peace "will not be achieved through Israel's annexation of territories that do not belong to it."²⁹ The next month, the entire Bloc caucus representing 32 MPs signed the MP pledge to oppose Israeli annexation. Significantly, that included the support of Party leader Yves-François Blanchet.³⁰

In May 2021, the Bloc attempted to pass a motion that would have had Canada "call upon Israel to stop colonizing and annexing Palestinian territories."³¹

Green Party

The Green Party demonstrated the strongest opposition to Israeli annexation. However, it is very important to note that the party's actions under consideration here occurred in the first half of 2020, prior to the election of new leader Annamie Paul. Paul's statements during the leadership race suggest that had she been leader during that same period, the party may have received a much lower grade.

The Green Party issued a very strong statement condemning Israeli annexation in May 2020, under the interim leadership of Jo-Ann Roberts. MP Paul Manly was quoted as saying, "If [annexation] goes ahead, it will represent one of the single most extreme unilateral moves made by Israel in recent decades." The statement suggested that Canada should impose sanctions on Israel if annexation went ahead, referring to Canada's actions against Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and Roberts was quoted as saying that "Canada must not stand idly by and allow Israel to violate international law with impunity."³² All three Green MPs signed the MP pledge against Israeli annexation.³³

As Israel's annexation threats were growing in intensity, the Green Party leadership campaign was underway, and this experience provides some insight into how new leader Annamie Paul would have addressed this issue. Paul told the media that she disagreed with annexation, saying: "It would be an illegal annexation and counter-productive to efforts to move toward a peaceful solution, in that region."³⁴ She added that she "expect[s] the Government of Canada to speak out forcefully against both of these actions and any other violations of international law and to work with the international community to bring Israel back into compliance with international law."³⁵


However, Paul was hostile to any questioning on this issue, declining to complete CJPME's leadership assessment questionnaire, and she was one of only 2 leadership candidates (out of 9) who refused to sign the MP pledge to oppose Israeli opposition.³⁶ When directly asked in a debate whether she supported sanctions against Israel in response to annexation, Paul did not give a direct answer; she said that when it comes to deadly conflict she preferred the approach of "dialogue," and that the most important thing for countries to do is "encouraging parties to return to the negotiation table," and "where necessary exert pressure on them to do that."³⁷ CJPME ranked Paul's positions lowest out of all the candidates.³⁸

Nonetheless, individual Green MPs have continued to speak out against Israeli annexation. In May 2021, as tensions rose in the region due to Israel's actions in Jerusalem, Paul Manly reiterated Elizabeth May's efforts in parliament to have the Canadian government "speak clearly to defend the Palestinian people from illegal - annexation, settlements & forced evictions."³⁹

2 Israel's Crimes of Apartheid / Crimes d'apartheid d'Israël

ISRAEL'S CRIMES OF APARTHEID CRIMES D'APARTHEID D'ISRAËL

Assessment / Évaluation

	Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	F
	Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
	New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	B-
	Bloc Québécois	D
	Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	C-

Executive Summary

Canada's political parties have mostly ignored recent reports by Israeli and international human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch (HRW), which conclude that Israel is practicing apartheid. However, the parties have approached this issue somewhat differently.

The Liberal government has “categorically” rejected the apartheid term, but allowed an MP who used the term to join the caucus – before forcing her to delete her statements.

The Conservatives have been extremely hostile to the use of the term apartheid and have been using it as a partisan attack against the Liberals.

The NDP leadership has been silent on the HRW report, but a handful of MPs have used the

Sommaire exécutif

Les partis politiques du Canada ont majoritairement ignoré les rapports récents des groupes de défenses des droits de la personne israéliens et internationaux, incluant Human Rights Watch (HRW) qui concluent qu'Israël pratique l'apartheid. Néanmoins, les partis ont approché cette question différemment.

Le gouvernement libéral a rejeté catégoriquement le terme *apartheid*, mais a permis à une députée ayant utilisé le terme de rejoindre le caucus - avant de la forcer à supprimer ses déclarations.

Les conservateurs ont été extrêmement hostiles à l'utilisation du terme *apartheid*, et l'utilisent comme une attaque partisane contre les libéraux.

apartheid term to describe Israeli practices, and the party appears to have allowed open debate on the issue.

The Bloc has been entirely silent on the HRW report, and says it is waiting for the results of an International Criminal Court investigation before commenting.

Two Green MPs used the apartheid term to describe Israel. However, this led to retaliation from the party leader's own senior advisor, who publicly called them antisemites and vowed to oust them from the party, causing one of those MPs to defect. This hostility from within the leader's office suggests a toxic atmosphere for debate on this topic.

La direction du NPD a été silencieuse concernant le rapport de HRW, mais un certain nombre de députés ont utilisé le terme *apartheid* pour décrire les pratiques israéliennes, et le parti semble avoir autorisé le débat ouvert sur la question.

Le Bloc a été complètement silencieux sur le rapport de HRW, et dit attendre les résultats d'une enquête de la Cour pénale internationale avant de faire des commentaires.

Deux députés du Parti vert ont utilisé le terme *apartheid* pour décrire Israël. Néanmoins, cela a entraîné des représailles de la part du conseiller principal de la cheffe du parti, qui les a traités publiquement d'antisémites et a promis de les éjecter du parti, ce qui a provoqué la défection d'un de ces députés. Cette hostilité au sein du bureau du chef de file suggère une atmosphère toxique pour le débat sur ce sujet.

Background

At the end of April 2021, Human Rights Watch published a landmark 200-plus page report which concluded that Israeli officials were committing crimes against humanity, including the crime of apartheid.⁴⁰ This followed a report in January by Israel's largest human rights organization B'Tselem, concluding that Israel is an apartheid regime, or "a regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea."⁴¹ The previous year, Israeli group Yesh Din concluded that Israel is committing apartheid in the West Bank.⁴² These findings, from mainstream international and Israeli human rights organizations, should have had profound implications for Canadian bilateral relations with Israel. Instead, they have mostly been ignored.

Liberal Party

In the first few weeks following the publication of the Human Rights Watch report, the Liberal government attempted to avoid speaking about its findings. A statement from Global Affairs Canada said only that the government was "aware" of the report, and that they would be reviewing it closely.⁴³ Liberal MP Anthony Housefather, chair of the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group, dismissed the gravity of the report, saying he "could not imagine why Canada would take any interest whatsoever in the report or respond to it."⁴⁴

However, the Liberals were forced to clarify their position on the "apartheid" word in June, after former Green MP Jenica Atwin crossed the floor to join the Liberal caucus. Since MP Atwin had recently used the term apartheid to describe Israel, this was used by the Conservatives as an opportunity to attack the Liberal Party. On June 11, Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau rose in Question Period to reject the

“apartheid” term, and in doing so conflated it with antisemitism. As Garneau stated: “the position of the Liberal government is extremely clear on the question of the apartheid label. We reject it categorically. It is not part of our approach with respect to Israel or the Jewish community. We, of course, are completely against any anti-Semitism that would be displayed by any Canadian citizen.”⁴⁵ A few days later, Liberal MP Ya’ara Saks issued a letter suggesting that those who use the term apartheid are “ill-informed” and antisemitic.⁴⁶

When Atwin announced that she was joining the Liberal Party, she initially defended her previous statements on apartheid, admitting that her terminology is difficult for some to “digest,” and claiming there were other Liberal MPs in the caucus who agreed with her.⁴⁷ However, she soon issued a new statement which appeared to distance herself from her previous remarks, and then quietly deleted her statements in support of Palestinians.⁴⁸

Only a few Liberal MPs mentioned the HRW report. Most significantly, MP Chandra Arya said in Parliament that “the Human Rights Watch report reflects the life conditions of Palestinians under occupation,” but stopped short of using the term apartheid itself.⁴⁹ Similarly, MP Mark Holland noted in a flyer to constituents that the government was “reviewing the conclusions of the UN [sic] Human Rights Watch Report.”⁵⁰ It is also worth noting that MPs Yasmin Ratansi and Marwan Tabbara, two former Liberal MPs who are now Independent, have used their new freedom to speak freely by repeatedly using the term apartheid to describe Israel, including in Parliament.⁵¹

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party did not engage with the content or findings of the Human Rights Report. Instead, the party used the statements by former Green MP Jenica Atwin on Israeli “apartheid” as an opportunity to attack the Liberal Party after they welcomed her into their caucus. One CPC press release, titled “Justin Trudeau welcomes another anti-Israeli MP into Liberal ranks,” claimed: “if you [are in favour of Israel’s right to exist], there is only one choice, Erin O’Toole and the Conservative Party of Canada.”⁵² CPC candidate Melissa Lantsman challenged Atwin to a public debate, tweeting: “Does [Atwin] still consider Israel an apartheid state? I think voters need to know where the Liberals stand. I suggest an open debate.”⁵³ In parliament, MP John Barlow questioned why the Liberal Party was “offering safe harbour to someone who described Israel as a state of apartheid.”⁵⁴ In a video ostensibly about antisemitism, O’Toole offered as an example of antisemitism “when a country whose governing coalition includes Jews, Muslims and Christians can be deemed an apartheid state by those looking for a quick headline.”⁵⁵

New Democratic Party

Neither NDP leader Jagmeet Singh nor NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris have commented on the recent Human Rights Watch report, nor have they used the term apartheid. However, several NDP MPs have used the term apartheid in reference to Israeli policies, including prior to the publication of the HRW report. Commenting on Israel’s vaccine roll out, which excludes most Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, MP Charlie Angus called it “appalling” and used the term apartheid.⁵⁶ During the May 2021 escalation of violence, several MPs including Matthew Green, Leah Gazan, and Niki Ashton either wrote, shared, or endorsed statements which used the language of apartheid (See Next Section).

Bloc Québécois

CJPME is not aware of any statements by BQ members on the Human Rights Watch report, nor using the term apartheid. In response to a Questionnaire in the current election on the party's position on Israel's crimes of Apartheid, the Bloc merely referenced that they were awaiting the results of the ongoing International Criminal Court investigation into war crimes in the OPT.⁵⁷


Green Party

The leadership of the Green Party has not responded to the Human Rights Watch report or used the term apartheid. However, during the escalation in May, MPs Paul Manly and Jenica Atwin both used the term apartheid to describe Israeli policies, and Manly specifically mentioned the HRW report (see next section). In retaliation over these comments, GPC leader Annamie Paul's senior advisor repeatedly made public attacks against Green MPs and vowed to "defeat" and replace them. Annamie Paul has refused to denounce her advisor's attacks, which gives the impression that she shares these views, and indicates that Green MPs who use this language can expect to see hostility from within the leader's office. (See next section).

3 Escalation of Israeli Violence, May 2021 / Escalade des violences israéliennes, mai 2021

ESCALATION OF ISRAELI VIOLENCE, MAY 2021 ESCALADE DES VIOLENCES ISRAÉLIENNES, MAI 2021

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	C
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A
 Bloc Québécois	B-
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	B-

Executive Summary

When violence escalated in May 2021 related to the eviction threats against Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, Israeli raids on Al Aqsa, and Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, the Liberal government took an indifferent “both sides” approach to the violence which failed to call out Israeli aggression. Despite this, the Liberals repeatedly raised concerns over Sheikh Jarrah, and eventually demanded that Israel stop settlement activity.

The Conservatives took a one-sided approach of unconditional support for Israel, blaming Hamas for the violence, and failing to even mention the underlying issues, giving them a failing grade.

The NDP raised the bar when it responded to violence by advocating for an arms embargo on

Sommaire exécutif

Lors de l'escalade de la violence en mai 2021 liée aux menaces d'expulsion de familles palestiniennes à Sheikh Jarrah, aux raids sur Al Aqsa et aux frappes aériennes israéliennes sur Gaza, le gouvernement libéral a refusé de prendre parti et de dénoncer l'agression israélienne. Malgré cela, les libéraux ont soulevé des inquiétudes à de nombreuses reprises concernant Sheikh Jarrah, et ont éventuellement demandé à Israël de mettre fin à toute activité de colonisation.

Les conservateurs ont pris une approche unilatérale de support inconditionnel envers Israël, blâmant Hamas pour la violence, et échouant à mentionner les problèmes sous-jacents, ce qui explique leur mauvaise note.

Israel. This was first time that the party had seriously proposed a concrete measure to stop Israeli violence. NDP MPs were outspoken early and often.

The Bloc responded relatively late, largely taking a “both-sides” approach, and neglecting to mention the underlying issues. However, they were more willing to directly criticize Israeli actions than the Liberals were, and attempted to pass a motion condemning Israeli settlements and annexation.

The response from the Greens exposed a divided party. While the entire parliamentary caucus expressed strong, principled statements of support for Palestinians, the response from the Green party leader was even less substantial than the Liberals. For this reason, the party gets a mixed score.

Le NPD a élevé le niveau lorsqu’il a répondu à la violence en défendant un embargo sur les armes sur Israël. C’était la première fois que le parti a sérieusement proposé une mesure concrète pour mettre fin à la violence israélienne. Les députés du NPD se sont exprimés très tôt et assez fréquemment.

Le Bloc a répondu relativement en retard, en prenant une approche majoritairement des « deux côtés », et en négligeant de mentionner les problèmes sous-jacents. Néanmoins, ils étaient plus aptes à critiquer directement les actions d’Israël que les libéraux, et ont tenté de passer une motion condamnant les colonies israéliennes et l’annexion.

La réponse du Parti vert a exposé un parti divisé, Alors que l’entière du caucus parlementaire ont exprimé une position forte de principe en soutien aux Palestiniens, la réponse de la cheffe du Parti vert étant encore moins substantielle que celle des libéraux. Pour cette raison, le parti reçoit un score mitigé.

Background

In the month of May 2021, a confluence of events in Israel and Palestine triggered a serious escalation of violence. Most significant among the factors was the imminent threat of expulsion of dozens of Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, to be replaced by Israeli settlers. The struggles of these families against forced evictions became the subject of global attention. At the same time, Israeli forces repeatedly attacked Palestinian worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan. On May 7, 170 Palestinians were injured after Israeli police violently stormed the mosque to disperse worshippers.⁵⁸

After weeks of escalation, Hamas threatened to fire rockets if Israel did not revoke the eviction orders and allow Muslims to worship at al-Aqsa in peace. Their requests ignored, Hamas fired rockets into Israel on May 10th, and Israel responded with airstrikes on the Gaza Strip. Airstrikes and rocket fire continued for 11 days, leaving more than 200 Palestinians and at least 12 Israelis dead. Israel’s conduct during this war has been highly criticized; the United Nations human rights chief has said that Israeli airstrikes against targets in Gaza “might constitute war crimes,”⁵⁹ and an investigation by Human Rights Watch found that the civilian targets of many Israeli strikes had “no evident military targets in the vicinity,” indicating that these acts may amount to war crimes.⁶⁰

Liberal Party

In general, the Liberal government responded to the developments in May with a restrained “both-sides” approach which failed to adequately address the issues of Israeli violence. Liberal statements consistently raised the core issues of forced evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, as well as Silwan, but rarely criticized Israel’s actions in a direct manner. Fortunately, this emphasis on Sheikh Jarrah and settlement activity was maintained even after the rocket fire from Hamas had commenced, when the Liberals could easily have shifted into a one-sided position of unconditional support for Israel.

As early as May 8th, Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau acknowledged the tensions in Sheikh Jarrah, stating that “As a close friend and ally of Israel, Canada is deeply concerned that recent decisions on settlements, and demolitions and evictions [...] would negatively impact livelihoods and undermine the prospects for a two-state solution.”⁶¹ This language was gradually strengthened over a series of statements. On March 12th, Garneau said that the violence around Al-Aqsa was “unacceptable,” and that “places of worship are for people to gather for peaceful reflection and should never be sites of violence.”⁶² On May 16th, Garneau said that Canada “fully supports Israel's right to assure its own security,” but that this comes with “immense responsibility and obligation to act in accordance with international law,” and that “the use of force has led to significant civilian loss of life and we urge utmost restraint.”⁶³ Finally, a statement to the UN Human Rights Council directly called on Israel “to stop settlement activities, including those in East Jerusalem and the West Bank,” adding that such “activities are a violation of international law and must cease.”⁶⁴ Canada’s Ambassador to the UN Bob Rae also tweeted about Sheikh Jarrah that “Canada has been clear: the evictions in East Jerusalem should not be happening.”⁶⁵

Many Liberal MPs shared the Minister’s statements and expressed their personal concern over the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and the attacks on Al-Aqsa. Several Liberal MPs went further and took a tougher stance than the rest of their party. In late April, MP Nate Erskine-Smith sponsored a petition about Sheikh Jarrah, which called on the Canadian government to “Call on Israel to stop its eviction of the Palestinian families in Sheik Jarrah,” and “take steps required to stop Israel’s violations of international law.”⁶⁶ When al-Aqsa was raided on May 8th, MP Salma Zahid urged Marc Garneau to “strongly condemn these actions and stand up for human rights,”⁶⁷ and in late May she released a statement urging “Canada to take a stronger stand in support of the Palestinian people and human rights.”⁶⁸ In her own letter to constituents, MP Iqra Khalid noted that she had raised with Justin Trudeau and Marc Garneau the possibility of “re-evaluating any trade of arms with Israel.”⁶⁹

MP Zahid also led a joint letter with the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group, published on May 20, which urged stronger action from the Canadian government in support of human rights and endorsed the use of sanctions against Israeli officials, of the type that Canada currently uses against Russian and Chinese officials. The letter was signed by 16 Liberal MPs.⁷⁰

Following the ceasefire, Canada announced a \$25 million aid package to Gaza, with up to \$5 million intended for “peacebuilding initiatives that advance the goal of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East.”⁷¹ However, Canada did not announce any measures to seek accountability or censure for Israel’s violations of human rights and international law. On a trip to the region at the end of June, Minister Garneau reiterated the call for Israel to “cease” settlement activity, but did so while boasting of the “unwavering friendship and partnership” with Israel and committing to expand bilateral ties.

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party has never directly commented on either the eviction threats in Sheikh Jarrah or Israel's violent raids on Al-Aqsa, but only responded to the escalation after Hamas started firing rockets, and then took a stance that entirely sided with Israel and ignored Palestinian concerns.

On May 10th, CPC foreign affairs critic Michael Chong tweeted concern over “rising tensions,” and condemning “the rising violence” while noting Israel’s “legitimate right to defend itself and its territory.”⁷² On May 11th, CPC leader O’Toole tweeted a statement that Conservatives “strongly condemn the frightening campaign of rocket attacks by Hamas,” and that “These terrorist attacks are indiscriminately targeting civilians and have already taken innocent lives.” It continued: “We recognize and support Israel’s right to defend itself against such terrorist attacks and urge that precautions are taken to spare innocent lives.”⁷³ The Conservative Party has also perpetuated common myths, both online and in Parliament, such as the notion that that Hamas and other Palestinian forces “use Palestinian civilians as human shields.”⁷⁴

Breaking significantly with the rest of her party, Conservative Senator Salma Ataullahjan signed Liberal MP Zahid’s May 20 letter in support of sanctions.⁷⁵ Disturbingly, her colleague Conservative Senator Linda Frum falsely accused the letter’s signatories of “endorsing the genocide of Jews.”⁷⁶

New Democratic Party

The NDP responded early to the threat of evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and the violent raids on Al-Aqsa, and raised the bar for all political parties by advocating for an arms embargo as a way to address Israeli violence.

In a tweet on May 8, Jagmeet Singh called for an end to the “Illegal occupation, demolitions, and forced evictions.”⁷⁷ That same day, a tweet by NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris referenced both the forced expulsions of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan and the attacks on Palestinians at the al-Aqsa Mosque, urging Israel to halt the “forced removal of Palestinians from their homes,” and to refrain from “blocking access to popular gathering spots.” Harris later called for a de-escalation and urged the Canadian government to “increase [its] efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict.”⁷⁸

What set the NDP’s response apart from the other parties was that it pushed for concrete measures, notably an arms embargo. On May 12, Singh used his time in Question Period to directly ask the Prime Minister to “commit to stopping the sale of arms to Israel while it is violating international human rights,” noting that “arming one side of the conflict is undermining the peace process and supporting illegal occupation.”⁷⁹ A statement from Jack Harris the next day reiterated the call for “Canada to end arms sales to Israel until the end of the illegal occupation.”⁸⁰ The NDP has campaigned on this position, first by publishing a petition to “stop selling arms to Israel,”⁸¹ and then by including this demand in its 2021 election campaign platform,⁸² and this call was also echoed by many NDP MPs. Finally, Jack Harris attempted to trigger an emergency debate on Canada’s response to the violence, following a CJPME email campaign asking the party to do so, though this was unsuccessful.⁸³

While the response from the NDP leadership was unusually strong, a few NDP MPs stood out in their remarks. MPs including Matthew Green, Leah Gazan, and Niki Ashton made many forceful statements in support of Palestinian human rights, and in several cases they used the correct terminology “apartheid”

and/or “ethnic cleansing” to describe Israel’s actions.⁸⁴ Four NDP MPs also signed the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group’s May 20 letter in support of sanctions.⁸⁵ Finally, Niki Ashton signed a joint statement from parliamentarians in Europe and North America which urged “concrete actions for justice for Palestinians and peace in the Middle East,” and which noted reports by human rights groups describing Israeli practices as apartheid.⁸⁶

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois responded relatively late to the escalation of violence, with its first comment on May 13 when BQ foreign affairs critic Stéphane Bergeron attempted to pass a motion in parliament. The motion took a somewhat “both-sides” approach to the issue, calling on Canada to “condemn the resurgence of violence between Palestine and Israel” and demand a ceasefire, “reaffirm its support for finding a two-state solution,” and “ask the Palestinian Authority to denounce Hamas’s rocket fire on Israel’s civilian population.” More pointedly, it also urged Canada to “call upon Israel to stop colonizing and annexing Palestinian territories.”⁸⁷ The motion did not gain unanimous consent, and so it did not pass.⁸⁸

The BQ issued a second statement on May 16, calling for an immediate ceasefire and reiterating Israel’s right to defend itself.⁸⁹ The statement also criticized Israel for targeting a tower in Gaza that housed the offices of international media, noting that given “its important military potential, Israel has a responsibility to react with measure and discernment.”⁹⁰

To CJPME’s knowledge, none of the BQ’s statements mentioned the forced expulsions in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, nor the violent raids on Al-Aqsa mosque, nor endorsed measures to address Israeli violence. However, BQ MP Mario Beaulieu did sign the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group’s May 20 letter in support of sanctions.⁹¹

Green Party

The response from the Green Party revealed a sharp divide between the party leadership and its representatives in Parliament. GPC leader Annamie Paul did not issue a statement until relatively late on May 10, after the rockets from Hamas had already begun. The brief statement called “for an immediate de-escalation in the violence and a return to dialogue as a means to seeking a peaceful solution,” but unlike the statements from the Liberals and NDP, it did not refer to the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah nor the raids on Al Aqsa, nor to any other specific event or underlying issue.⁹² A second statement was issued on May 16 which urged a “victim-centred approach” and “multi-track peace diplomacy.” While it alluded to a need to end “any illegal forms of eviction or settlement expansion,” it did not directly criticize Israeli actions.⁹³

In contrast, all three members of the GPC’s parliamentary caucus expressed strong statements in support of Palestinian human rights. MP Elizabeth May in Question Period “asked Canada to speak out clearly to defend the Palestinian people,” noting that “true peace will never be achieved if we keep ignoring that one side is the occupier, the other is occupied.”⁹⁴ MP Paul Manly tweeted a reference to the recent Human Rights Watch report on Israel’s crimes of apartheid and said that “what is happening right now in Sheikh Jarrah is ethnic cleansing,”⁹⁵ and attempted to trigger an emergency debate.⁹⁶ Finally, MP Jenica Atwin tweeted her disappointment at the Green party’s official response, noting that



it was “totally inadequate” and adding, “I stand with Palestine and condemn the unthinkable airstrikes in Gaza. End Apartheid!”⁹⁷

This divide over the issue of Israeli violence contributed to a crisis in the party. In retaliation for these pro-Palestinian statements from Green MPs, Annamie Paul’s senior advisor publicly accused Green MPs and other politicians of antisemitism and vowed to “defeat” them and replace them with “Zionist” candidates.⁹⁸ Annamie Paul did not publicly respond to, or criticize, her advisor’s threats against her caucus, but maintained that the rift was simply a difference in opinion between members of her party.⁹⁹ In early June, Jenica Atwin crossed the floor to join the Liberal caucus, citing the attacks as a factor.¹⁰⁰ The ongoing turmoil within the party appears to be related, at least in part, to Annamie Paul’s unwillingness to defend her MPs from attacks within her own office on the question of Palestinian human rights.

4 Canada’s Voting at the United Nations / Votes du Canada aux Nations unies

CANADA’S VOTING AT THE UNITED NATIONS VOTES DU CANADA AUX NATIONS UNIES

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	D+
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	B
 Bloc Québécois	n/a
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	n/a

Executive Summary

Canada’s anti-Palestine voting pattern at the UN, established under Stephen Harper, has largely remained in place under the Liberal government. However, in the last two years, Canada has voted in favour of Palestinian self-determination, while keeping the other votes the same, suggesting that they unfairly single out Israel for criticism. While this lone vote is a positive step in the right direction, it does not change the government’s overall approach of opposing most Palestine-related motions at the UN out of principle.

Conservatives, on the other hand, are promising to reverse the Liberal’s lone vote, and to return to uniformly voting against all motions that support Palestinian and their rights. This

Sommaire exécutif

Le schéma de vote anti-Palestine du Canada aux Nations unies, établi sous Stephen Harper, est largement demeuré en place sous le gouvernement libéral. Néanmoins, ces deux dernières années, le Canada a voté en faveur de l’autodétermination du peuple palestinien, sans néanmoins changer les autres votes, suggérant qu’ils critiquent injustement Israël. Alors que ce vote unique est une étape positive dans la bonne direction, cela ne change pas l’approche globale du gouvernement de s’opposer à plus de motions relatives à la Palestine et aux Nations unies par principe.

Les conservateurs d’autre part, promettent de renverser le vote unique des libéraux, et de recommencer à voter uniformément contre

approach of absolutely blind support for Israel at the UN gives them a failing grade.

NDP leader Singh and the NDP's foreign affairs critic have both indicated that they want Canada to vote for additional resolutions in support of Palestinian rights at the UN, but this has not been a priority.

Neither the Bloc nor the Greens have been vocal about Canada's voting at the UN. The Bloc's foreign affairs critic did express support for Canada's lone vote for Palestinian self-determination, and a Green MP presented a petition from the public urging Canada to start voting for Palestinian human rights, but this is not enough information to properly evaluate the parties.

toutes les motions qui soutiennent les Palestiniens et leurs droits. Cette approche de soutien absolument aveugle à Israël à l'ONU leur donne une note d'échec.

Le chef du NPD, Jagmeet Singh, et le porte-parole en matière d'Affaires étrangères du NPD ont tous les deux indiqués qu'ils désiraient que le Canada vote pour plus de résolutions en soutien aux droits des Palestiniens aux Nations unies, mais cela n'a pas été une priorité.

Ni le Bloc ni les Verts n'ont critiqué ouvertement les votes du Canada à l'ONU. Le porte-parole en matière d'Affaires étrangères du Bloc a exprimé son soutien pour le vote du Canada en faveur de l'autodétermination du peuple palestinien, et un député du Parti vert a présenté une pétition du public demandant au Canada de commencer à voter pour les droits humains des Palestiniens, mais il n'y a pas assez d'informations pour évaluer correctement ces partis.

Background

Every year, the United Nations General Assembly votes on a series of at least 16 standing resolutions relating to Palestinian human rights, on issues related to settlements, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem. In the early 2000s, Canada voted "Yes" on most of these resolutions, but this pattern began to reverse itself under Prime Minister Stephen Harper. By 2010, Canada had aligned itself almost entirely with Israel, voting against every single one (with one abstention), and this voting pattern largely continues today.¹⁰¹ These votes put Canada in a very small minority at the UN, grouping it with a handful of small countries along with the United States and Israel. This extreme minority position is understood as a partial explanation for why Canada lost its bid for a seat on the Security Council in 2020.¹⁰²

Liberal Party

For four years, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau maintained Harper's anti-Palestine voting record at the UN, despite his commitment to a "rules-based international order." In 2019 there was a minor change to this policy, as Canada once again voted "Yes" in support of Palestinian self-determination.¹⁰³ This move, according to Canadian officials, was intended as an act of indirect protest against U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's declaration that Israeli settlements are not necessarily illegal.¹⁰⁴

The Liberal government repeated this single vote in 2020. Trudeau explained that "Canada's vote was a reflection of our long-standing commitment to the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian people and for Israelis," but added that his government has also "stood up consistently against the illegitimate singling-out of Israel through one-sided votes at the United Nations."¹⁰⁵ Similarly, as Foreign

Affairs Minister Champagne told a Conservative critic, “You know well that we vote against the vast majority of these yearly Israel-related resolutions It's not inconsistent with being a steadfast ally of Israel.”¹⁰⁶ The Liberal government’s support for this lone vote was therefore done at the same time as it continues to characterize most UN votes for Palestinian human rights as one-sided, and therefore *de facto* illegitimate.

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservatives first established Canada’s current anti-Palestine voting pattern during the Stephen Harper administration, and strongly criticized the Liberals when they partially broke this pattern with a single vote in favour of Palestinian self-determination. When the Liberals first voted for this resolution in 2019, then Foreign Affairs Critic Erin O’Toole called it “childish diplomacy”¹⁰⁷ and accused the Liberals of propping up their “failing security council bid.”¹⁰⁸ When the vote was repeated in 2020, O’Toole claimed that the Liberals “turned their back on our ally Israel,”¹⁰⁹ and the matter was brought up as a subject of debate several times. In their 2021 election platform, the Conservative Party promises to “return Canada to its longstanding policy of not singling out Israel for criticism at the United Nations and international fora.”¹¹⁰

New Democratic Party

The NDP has signaled its opposition to Canada’s current voting pattern but has not made it a priority. In a response to CJPME’s 2017 NDP leadership questionnaire, Singh stated he “would publicly oppose Canada’s present voting patterns,”¹¹¹ but CJPME is not aware of any statement from Singh. Nonetheless, in a webinar with Canadian Palestinian organizations in November 2020, NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris said the NDP was “very glad” to see Canada vote in favour again for Palestinian self-determination, and criticized Canada for voting against most other motions, saying: “It’s time for this to change.”¹¹² In a parliamentary committee, Harris challenged foreign affairs minister Champagne, saying that Canada’s support for the UN resolution “is an important step for Canada to take on the international stage,” but added, “what step is Canada prepared to take to advance the cause of the two-state solution?”¹¹³

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois has not been vocal about Canada’s voting pattern at the UN. However, foreign affairs critic Bergeron expressed support for Canada’s decision to vote in favour of Palestinian self-determination. Bergeron dismissed criticism from the Conservatives that the vote was anti-Israel, calling it instead “a responsible position in favour of peace, both for Palestine and Israel.”¹¹⁴

Green Party




The Green Party as a whole has not been vocal about Canada’s voting pattern at the UN. However, Green MP Paul Manly presented a petition in October 2020 which included a call for Canada to “vote at the UN General Assembly in alignment with the majority of the international community taking a stance in line with international law and human rights for Palestinians.”¹¹⁵

5 ICC Investigation of War Crimes in Palestine / Enquête de la CPI sur les crimes de guerre en Palestine

ICC INVESTIGATION OF WAR CRIMES IN PALESTINE

ENQUÊTE DE LA CPI SUR LES CRIMES DE GUERRE EN PALESTINE

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	D+
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	B+
 Bloc Québécois	C
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	B-

Executive Summary

The Liberal government has repeatedly intervened to try to discourage the International Criminal Court from investigating Israeli war crimes. However, they have also consistently expressed the view that they support the ICC's independence, and they mildly criticized Trump's sanctions on ICC officials. This gives some hope that they may not further obstruct the ICC investigation now that it has been launched.

The Conservatives have promised to oppose the ICC investigation, even going as far as to put it in their election platform. It is not clear what form this opposition may take, and if they would

Sommaire exécutif

Le gouvernement libéral a, à de nombreuses reprises, tenté de décourager la Cour pénale internationale d'enquêter sur les crimes de guerre israéliens. Cependant, ils ont également exprimé de manière constante leur soutien à l'indépendance de la CPI et ont légèrement critiqué les sanctions de Trump à l'encontre des responsables de la CPI. Cela permet d'espérer qu'ils ne feront pas davantage obstruction à l'enquête de la CPI maintenant qu'elle a été lancée.

Les conservateurs ont promis de s'opposer à l'enquête de la CPI, allant même jusqu'à en parler sur leur plateforme électorale. Il n'est pas clair

endorse Trump-like sanctions on ICC officials, or withdraw Canadian support for the Court.

The NDP has criticized the government for trying to discourage the ICC investigation, and called on Canada to let the court do its work. These statements do not quite amount to a direct endorsement of the investigation itself, but a call for Canada to cease obstructionism.

The Bloc supports the ICC investigation but has been largely silent on the issue. Regrettably, the party uses the eventual outcome of the investigation as an excuse to delay taking action against Israel.

The Green Party has a policy on the books in support of the ICC investigation, but CJPME was unable to find any statements from the party, and the leader has avoided questions on the topic.

quelle forme cette opposition pourrait prendre, et si elle soutiendrait le type de sanctions que Trump voulait imposer contre les responsables de la CPI, ou retirerait le soutien du Canada à la Cour.

Le NPD a critiqué le gouvernement pour avoir essayé de décourager l'enquête de la CPI, et a demandé au Canada de laisser la Cour faire son travail. Ces déclarations ne constituent pas tout à fait une approbation directe de l'enquête elle-même, mais un appel au Canada pour qu'il cesse de faire de l'obstruction.

Le Bloc soutien l'enquête de la CPI mais a été très silencieux sur le sujet. Malheureusement, le parti utilise le résultat éventuel de l'enquête comme une excuse pour retarder la prise de mesure contre Israël.

Le Parti vert a officiellement une politique en soutien à l'enquête de la CPI, mais CJPME a été incapable de trouver une quelconque déclaration du parti, et la cheffe a évité toute question sur le sujet.

Background

In March of 2021, the International Criminal Court (ICC) finally launched an investigation into alleged war crimes by Israeli and Palestinian officials in Palestine (encompassing the Occupied Palestinian Territories).¹¹⁶ This followed the ICC's decision to investigate alleged war crimes in Afghanistan by the United States and other forces. In retaliation, the US and Israel coordinated the imposition of US sanctions on the ICC chief prosecutor and staff to discourage the investigations from moving forward.¹¹⁷ These actions have jeopardized the ability of the ICC to act independently.

Meanwhile, Canada's policy during consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments has been to oppose an ICC investigation of Israeli officials on the grounds that Canada does not recognize Palestinian statehood, arguing that therefore the ICC does not have proper jurisdiction. However, the State of Palestine acceded to the ICC in 2015 and a pre-trial deliberation has concluded that the ICC has proper jurisdiction to proceed.

Liberal Party

The Liberal government has repeatedly intervened to discourage the ICC from proceeding with an investigation of Israeli war crimes. In 2015, 2018, and 2020, Canada submitted its opinion to the ICC arguing that Palestine is not a state, and therefore the ICC does not have jurisdiction.¹¹⁸ During this same

time, however, the Liberals continued to argue for the ICC's independence. Following the imposition of Trump's sanctions on ICC officials, Canada's foreign affairs minister Champagne said that "personnel of the [ICC] should not be singled out for their work," but Canada did not go as far as to publicly condemn Trump's actions.¹¹⁹ Following the launch of the investigation in February 2021, Canada repeated its position undermining the validity of the probe, but once again said that Canada "strongly supports" the ICC and "continues to respect the independence of its judges and of the ICC Prosecutor."¹²⁰

In 2020, Amnesty International accused the Liberal government of threatening the ICC by implying that Canada would withhold funding if an investigation of Israel went ahead.¹²¹ When asked directly about this by the NDP, Champagne denied making any link between the ICC investigation and Canada's funding.¹²²

In response to criticism from the NDP about their opposition to the investigation, Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau said that "Canada strongly supports the ICC and the important work it does as a key pillar of the rules-based international order," then reiterated Canada's "long standing position that it does not recognize a Palestinian state because it has not yet occurred and therefore it does not recognize the accession of such a state to international treaties."¹²³ When pressed on this in committee, a Global Affairs spokesperson claimed that the attempt by Palestinians to accede to international bodies was just to "make a political point" and shouldn't be taken seriously.¹²⁴

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party opposes the ICC investigation of Israeli officials and is promising to work against it. In an email to *The Canadian Jewish Record* in April 2020, Conservative leader Erin O'Toole said that they do not "support any unilateral action whether it involves the Palestinians using the [International Criminal Court] against Israel, or the Israelis annexing disputed territory."¹²⁵ In doing so, O'Toole compared actions by the Palestinians to seek justice in an international forum to Israeli threats to illegally annex occupied territory. Along those lines, the Conservative Party's 2021 election platform promises to "oppose the International Criminal Court's politicization and intrusion into bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations,"¹²⁶ despite the fact that the ICC's investigation has no bearing on bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. It is not clear whether the Conservatives' opposition would be limited to expressing its opinion, as the Liberal government has done, or if it would endorse the type of sanctions promoted by the Trump administration.

New Democratic Party

The NDP supports the ability of the ICC to carry out an investigation of Israeli war crimes, and has repeatedly pressed the government to drop its opposition. However, CJPME is unaware of any statement from the NDP expressing support for the idea of the investigation itself.

In 2020, responding to Canada's letter opposing the ICC investigation, NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris urged Canada to answer "allegations that it has tried to bully the [ICC] on the issue of Palestine."¹²⁷ Later that year, Harris pressed Foreign Affairs Minister Champagne on this "serious accusation, which deserves a response from you and this government."¹²⁸

Following the launch of the ICC investigation in February 2021, Harris tweeted that he was “Glad to see the [ICC] confirm its jurisdiction in Palestine,” and urged: “Now that the Court has made a decision, Canada should end its objection & let the court do its work.”¹²⁹ A few months later, Harris asked Foreign Affairs Minister Garneau how its objections to the ICC investigation were consistent with “Canada’s stated commitment to a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine?”¹³⁰

Bloc Québécois

With a single recent exception, CJPME was unable to find any statements from the Bloc Québécois on the ICC investigation of Israeli war crimes. However, in a recent response to a question about sanctions in an election questionnaire, the Bloc states that it supports the ICC investigation into alleged war crimes by Israel and Hamas. The Bloc claims that Hamas has committed war crimes and that sanctions against it are appropriate, but that it is awaiting the results of the ICC investigation before deciding on the appropriateness of sanctions towards Israel.¹³¹ Despite the implication that the party is open regarding the outcome of the process, the Bloc’s initial position is not only partial to Israel, but also downplays the seriousness of Israel’s violence. Moreover, it uses the eventual outcome of the investigation as an excuse to delay taking action against Israel.

The Bloc also supports recognizing statehood for Palestine, which would effectively eliminate Canada’s official grounds for objecting to the investigation. In June 2021, Bloc foreign affairs critic Stéphane Bergeron asked whether “we are not part of the problem [in terms of ongoing infrastructure issues in the Palestinian territories] by refusing to recognize Palestine.”¹³²





Green Party

In 2016, the membership of the Green Party of Canada passed a resolution on Israel and Palestine which committed the party to calling on Canada “to ask the [ICC] to prioritize its investigation into charges of potential war crimes by members of the Israeli forces.”¹³³ However, apart from this policy, CJPME was unable to find any statements from the Green Party on this issue. There are no statements from leader Annamie Paul, who used to work at the ICC. Paul declined to answer CJPME’s questionnaire in 2020, which included a question on the ICC, citing “numerous problematic design elements.”¹³⁴

6 Canada's Aid to Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) / Aide du Canada aux réfugiés palestiniens (UNRWA)

AID TO PALESTINE REFUGEES (UNRWA) AIDE DU CANADA AUX RÉFUGIÉS PALESTINIENS (UNRWA)

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	B+
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A
 Bloc Québécois	B
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	B

Executive Summary

After the Harper government had suspended Canadian aid to UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestine refugees, the Liberal government restored funding and has consistently maintained this support over the last 4 years. However, the government declined to provide additional emergency support as the agency faced a financial crisis, and has voted against motions in support of UNRWA at the UN.

The Conservatives are hostile to UNRWA, have repeatedly engaged in attacks against the agency, and are promising to defund UNRWA unless significant, unspecified changes are made.

Sommaire exécutif

Après que le gouvernement Harper ait suspendu l'aide canadienne à l'UNRWA, l'Office de secours de l'ONU pour les réfugiés palestiniens, le gouvernement libéral a restauré son financement et a maintenu son soutien ces quatre dernières années. Néanmoins, le gouvernement a refusé de fournir une aide d'urgence supplémentaire alors que l'office était confrontée à une crise financière, et a voté contre les motions de soutien à l'UNRWA aux Nations unies.

Les conservateurs sont hostiles à l'UNRWA, et ont engagé des attaques contre l'agence à répétition, et promettent de définancer l'UNRWA à moins que des changements significatifs soient faits.

The NDP has been a reliable supporter of UNRWA, and has pushed the government to increase its assistance to the agency.

Neither the Bloc nor the Greens have been particularly outspoken about UNRWA, and do not have an identifiable policy. Nonetheless, both parties have defended the agency against attacks from Conservatives.

Le NPD a été un partisan fiable de l'UNRWA et a poussé le gouvernement à augmenter son aide à l'agence.

Ni le bloc ni les Verts ne se sont exprimés sur l'UNRWA. Ils n'ont pas non plus une politique identifiable. Néanmoins, les deux partis ont défendu l'agence contre les attaques des conservateurs.

Background

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is the UN agency responsible for Palestine refugees, many of whom were displaced during the Nakba in 1948. More than five million refugees receive UNRWA's services, which include education, basic healthcare, and shelter.¹³⁵ The agency's budget is almost entirely funded by voluntary donations from UN member states, which makes it highly vulnerable to political considerations. In 2018, US President Trump cut off all US aid to UNRWA, representing about a third of its budget, contributing to the agency's "worst financial crisis" ever in late 2020.¹³⁶ Biden has since promised to partially restore US aid to UNRWA, which will partially alleviate the agency's concerns.¹³⁷ In this context, Canadian contributions are more important than ever.

Liberal Party

The Liberal government restored Canada's commitment to UNRWA in 2016, reversing the cuts made under Harper. Since then, Canada has contributed about \$20 million per year.¹³⁸ In December 2020, the Liberal government announced \$90 million in funding to UNRWA over 3 years, to "help respond to the rising needs of vulnerable Palestinian refugees,"¹³⁹ although this did not include any additional emergency funding as requested by the agency in response to its financial crisis.

After the escalation in violence in May 2021, Karina Gould announced \$25m in aid to Palestinians, tweeting that "Canada is providing assistance through experienced partners to Palestinians as they recover from the damage caused by the recent conflict,"¹⁴⁰ and it was reported that \$4 million of this was earmarked for UNRWA.¹⁴¹

The Liberal government has continued to fund UNRWA despite ongoing attacks and accusations from the Conservative Party and pro-Israel organizations. In 2021, UNRWA was accused of distributing some educational materials that were considered problematic. In response, Minister of International Development Karina Gould said she was "deeply concerned" over the allegations, and said that "Canada takes this issue seriously,"¹⁴² instructing Canadian officials to "investigate."¹⁴³ However, Gould declined requests from Conservatives for Canada to pause funding to UNRWA while the investigation was underway. Liberal MP Ya'ara Saks also defended the funding, saying: "We have to remind ourselves there are people behind all of this. There are human beings ... And we have to do our best as an international community not to abandon them." Saks noted that Canada has stringent monitoring of UNRWA, and that "we will not tolerate misuse or diversion of funds for terrorism."¹⁴⁴

On at least four occasions since February 2021, Gould has defended Canada's funding to UNRWA in Parliament, emphasizing that "there are 500,000 Palestinian children who rely on UNRWA for their education and for their health care."¹⁴⁵

At the same time, the Liberal government has repeatedly voted against a UN resolution supporting UNRWA, and abstained on another, failing to give the agency diplomatic support on the international stage.¹⁴⁶

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party has for years been hostile to the idea of Canadian funding for UNRWA, perpetuating the false claims¹⁴⁷ that UNRWA supports antisemitism and terrorism. Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper eliminated funding to UNRWA during his leadership, citing alleged ties to Hamas, and in a 2019 federal election debate Conservative party leader Andrew Scheer similarly promised to "pull the funding from UNWRA and ensure Canadian taxpayers' dollars are not going to advocate terrorist activities."¹⁴⁸

This position has remained the same under new leadership of Erin O'Toole. During the party's leadership race, O'Toole said he would "end funding for UNWRA unless it is significantly reformed," citing alleged "support to terror organizations."¹⁴⁹ Over the past year, the Conservative Party has repeatedly criticized the Liberal government for its support to UNRWA, often boosting negative reports from pro-Israel organizations. In January 2021, Conservative MP Marty Morantz called on the government to "suspend funding" to UNRWA,¹⁵⁰ and the party has raised their concerns with UNRWA on at least seven different occasions in Parliament since then, including proposing a motion in the Foreign Affairs committee to express "deep concern" over the content of textbook used by UNRWA.¹⁵¹

The party's federal election platform for 2021 includes a threat to defund UNRWA, promising to: "defund [international development] programs aligned against Canadian values (including those delivered by UNRWA unless it is significantly reformed) and replace them with new education initiatives that uphold universal human dignity, pluralism, and peaceful coexistence."¹⁵² While the wording of this promise leaves the door open to maintained funding from Canada, O'Toole does not specify which reforms would satisfy him. UNRWA is already one of the most vetted and scrutinized organizations in the world. This promise is probably not in good faith.

New Democratic Party

The NDP has been a reliable supporter of UNRWA. For example, during Israel's assault on Gaza in 2014, the NDP called on the Harper government to reverse its cuts to UNRWA.¹⁵³ In 2016, shortly following the election of Justin Trudeau's government, NDP foreign affairs critic H el ene Laverdi ere issued a statement urging the government to "immediately renew contributions" to UNRWA, noting that "UNRWA is a lifeline for many Palestinian refugees, providing food, education, health care, and jobs. These supports contribute to greater stability and are very much in line with Canada's humanitarian agenda."¹⁵⁴

Since the 2019 federal election, the NDP has pushed for increased assistance to UNRWA. In October 2020, NDP MPs Jack Harris and Alexandre Boulerice wrote to Minister Garneau urging Canada to "significantly increase its annual contribution" to UNRWA.¹⁵⁵ In late 2020, foreign affairs critic Jack Harris

brought up the issue of UNRWA's dire financial crisis and asked Minister Garneau: "Is that something your government is prepared to respond to, increasing our aid and dealing with the emergency now facing the Palestinian people?"¹⁵⁶

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Quebecois supports UNRWA but has few public statements about it. In late 2020, Bloc foreign affairs critic Stéphen Bergeron asked about UNRWA's funding crisis and Canada's support for refugees on two occasions in committee,¹⁵⁷ which seemed to indicate that the Bloc would support increased funding. In 2021, Bergeron pushed back against Conservative criticism of UNRWA, noting that "UNRWA plays an absolutely crucial role for many Palestinian refugees who need the organization's support," and warned that by "repeatedly attacking it in this manner, we'll only increase the financial difficulties that the organization may face."¹⁵⁸

Green Party

CJPME has been unable to find any statements from the Green Party of Canada on the issue of UNRWA. However, in an exchange during a federal election debate in 2019, then-party leader Elizabeth May responded to a proposal by Conservative leader Scheer to defund UNRWA by interjecting "No," then went on to defend the humanitarian work of UNRWA, noting that she had personally visited UNRWA-run schools.¹⁵⁹

7 Free Speech on Palestine / Liberté d'expression sur la Palestine

FREE SPEECH ON PALESTINE

LIBERTÉ D'EXPRESSION SUR LA PALESTINE

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	F
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	B+
 Bloc Québécois	B-
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	B

Executive Summary

Free expression has always been a challenge for proponents of Palestinian human rights, taking various forms over the decades. Most recently, challenges to free expression regarding Palestinian rights have involved attacks on the BDS movement and attempts to conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

The Liberal government has condemned BDS on multiple occasions, conflating it with antisemitism. It also adopted the highly controversial and overly broad IHRA definition of antisemitism at the federal level, and created a special envoy mandated to further promote the definition.

The Conservatives have gone on the offensive to attack various forms of Palestinian activism, including BDS, conflating it with antisemitism.

Sommaire exécutif

La liberté d'expression a toujours été un défi pour les défenseurs des droits humains des Palestiniens, prenant plusieurs formes à travers les décennies. Plus récemment, c'est le mouvement BDS qui a été remis en question, et qualifié d'antisémite.

Le gouvernement libéral a condamné le mouvement BDS à de nombreuses occasions, le confondant avec de l'antisémitisme. Il a également adopté une définition hautement controversée et extrêmement large de l'IHRA au niveau fédéral, et a désigné un envoyé spécial chargé de promouvoir davantage cette définition.

Les conservateurs sont passés à l'offensive pour attaquer diverses formes d'activisme palestinien, notamment le BDS, en l'assimilant à de

They are promising to “combat” those who harshly criticize Israel, but it is not clear what this would mean.

The NDP has contradicted itself on the issue over time, but its position has been improving in recent years. The NDP leadership has continued to reject the BDS movement, but at the same time has begun to promote an arms embargo on Israel, which is consistent with the strategy of BDS. NDP MPs have also been increasing vocal in calling for economic sanctions against Israel. The party recognizes the risks of IHRA to free speech on Palestine.

The Bloc does not have a clear position on BDS, although in the past they have defended it as legitimate. More recently, the Bloc appeared to have endorsed the government’s condemnation of BDS, at the same time as speaking favourably about taking action against settlement goods. CJPME is not aware of any Bloc statements on IHRA.

The Green position on these matters is not clear. While their official policy supports the tactics and goals of BDS, two consecutive party leaders have condemned the BDS movement. It is not clear where the party stands on IHRA.

l’antisémitisme. Ils promettent de combattre ceux qui critiquent durement Israël. Une promesse qui reste assez vague.

Le NPD s’est contredit sur la question à travers le temps, mais s’est amélioré ces dernières années. Le leadership du NPD a continué de rejeter le mouvement BDS, mais au même moment a commencé à promouvoir un embargo sur les armes sur Israël, ce qui est consistant avec la stratégie BDS.

Les députés du NPD ont également été très vocale sur le fait d’imposer des sanctions économiques à Israël. Et le parti reconnaît le risque que présente la définition de l’IHRA sur la liberté d’expression sur la Palestine.

Le Bloc n’a pas une position claire sur le mouvement BDS, bien qu’ils aient défendu le mouvement par le passé. Plus récemment, le Bloc semble avoir soutenu la condamnation du mouvement BDS par le gouvernement, tout en parlant de prendre des mesures contre les biens issus de la colonisation. CJPME n’a trouvé aucune déclaration du Bloc concernant l’IHRA.

La position du Parti vert sur ces sujets n’est pas claire. Alors que leur politique officielle supporte les tactiques et objectifs du BDS, deux cheffes consécutives du parti ont condamné le mouvement BDS. La position du parti concernant l’IHRA n’est pas claire.

Background

There are two important areas where the ability of Canadians to speak honestly about Israeli human rights abuses and protest in solidarity with Palestinians has been under threat. First, in the last fifteen years or so, Canadian political parties have taken measures to condemn and discourage participation in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement (BDS). BDS is a call from Palestinian civil society for the international community to impose economic pressure on Israel until it complies with international law. In 2016, Parliament passed a non-binding resolution to condemn the BDS movement and its supporters, and the main political parties have either rejected BDS or distanced themselves from the movement. In the United States, dozens of states have enacted anti-BDS legislation to punish BDS supporters and discourage activism, but similar initiatives have not yet been successful in Canada.

More recently, political actors have been pushing the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (IHRA), which conflates criticism of Israel with antisemitism. IHRA has been adopted by the federal government, the provincial governments of Ontario and Quebec, and some cities. The IHRA definition presents a threat to debate on Israel and Palestine as it can be used to restrict the ability of human rights advocates to organize. In fact, proponents of IHRA have often said that it should be used to ban, defund, or disallow BDS activity and criticism of Israel.¹⁶⁰ For this reason, IHRA is opposed by a wide range of Canadian civil society actors, including Independent Jewish Voices Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Federation of Students, the BC Civil Liberties Association, more than 600 academics, and many others.¹⁶¹

Liberal Party

The Liberal Party under Justin Trudeau has been consistently hostile to Palestinian solidarity activism, and does not have a strong position on free expression. Over the years, Trudeau has frequently accused the BDS movement and anti-Zionism of being antisemitic, and in 2016 the Liberals voted with the Conservative Party to condemn BDS and its supporters. Only two Liberal MPs voted against, and twelve abstained.¹⁶² This position was reiterated in 2020, when Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said that “Canada remains very concerned about any effort to single out or isolate Israel internationally. Let me be firm and clear to all Canadians: We condemn BDS.”¹⁶³ The following year, new Foreign Minister Marc Garneau repeated this point: “We condemn BDS ... Canada remains deeply concerned about efforts to isolate Israel internationally.”¹⁶⁴

The Liberal Government adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in 2019 as part of Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy,¹⁶⁵ although the exact implications of this policy, and whether the IHRA is being enforced against speech on Palestine, is not clear. In 2020, Justin Trudeau named Irwin Cotler as Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, with a mandate to advocate for the adoption of IHRA’s definition by universities and other institutions.¹⁶⁶ Cotler is a leading proponent of the “new antisemitism” thesis, which claims that harsh criticism of Israel often constitutes antisemitism.¹⁶⁷

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party has long been a fierce opponent of the Palestine solidarity movement, and it has supported initiatives to discourage free expression on Palestine. For example, in 2015, the Harper government signed an MOU with Israel to develop “a coordinated, public diplomacy initiative both bilaterally and in international and multilateral fora to oppose boycotts of Israel.”¹⁶⁸

Conservative Party leader Erin O’Toole has repeated the same rhetoric. In the 2019 leadership race, O’Toole said that as Prime Minister he would “vocally oppose efforts to isolate Israel” on campus, “particularly as calls to isolate Israel are often thinly-veiled anti-Semitism.”¹⁶⁹ In a video statement to the National Summit on Antisemitism in June 2021, which he did not attend, O’Toole said “antisemitism takes many forms,” and that there has been an increase in “polite antisemitism that gets a quiet acceptance from too many corners in our society.” In that video, O’Toole accuses anti-Zionism of being a “polite antisemitism” that tries “to be more socially acceptable” in order to infiltrate universities and institutions and “find a place in the halls of power.”¹⁷⁰

Conservative MPs are vocally supportive of IHRA,¹⁷¹ and of labelling criticism of Israel as antisemitic. While O'Toole has not often spoken about IHRA in specific terms, this may be because the Liberal government has already adopted it. In fact, given the party's hostile attitude towards criticism of Israel, there is a risk that a Conservative government would deliberately enforce IHRA provisions in a way to target and punish supporters of Palestinian rights. In their 2021 election platform, the party promises to "combat the delegitimization of Israel,"¹⁷² but it is not clear what mechanisms they would use to do so.

New Democratic Party

Historically, the leadership of the NDP has rejected and distanced itself from the BDS movement.¹⁷³ As of the 2019 election, the position of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh is still ambiguous; Singh had spoken out against a provincial motion to condemn BDS, and expressed openness to considering the use of sanctions, but the party had blocked grassroots efforts to discuss a ban on settlement goods at the 2018 policy convention.¹⁷⁴

Since the 2019 election, the NDP's position on BDS has continued to be contradictory. In a December 2019 roundtable discussion with the Centre Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Singh said "the official position of the [NDP] is that we do not endorse BDS," and vowed that it would not be a part of the NDP's future.¹⁷⁵ Singh also provided a weak defence of the right to participate in BDS, saying that while he doesn't support BDS, "I haven't taken that next step to say that it should be banned as a thought." He added, "It creates a bit of a moral conundrum of where to draw the line of limiting thought."¹⁷⁶

Despite this position, in February 2021 the NDP adopted a sanctions policy on Israel, including a ban on trade with settlements and an arms embargo, which is consistent with the demands of BDS.¹⁷⁷ There are also a number of NDP MPs who have been more direct in their support for economic pressure on Israel.¹⁷⁸ During the escalation in May 2021, MP Charlie Angus tweeted an article favourably comparing the BDS movement to sanctions against apartheid South Africa, writing: "Sanctions brought justice in South Africa. Sanctions can bring change in Israel/Palestine."¹⁷⁹

The NDP's position on IHRA is similarly complicated. In 2019, the NDP raised concerns about the possibility that IHRA "could be a threat for people who legitimately denounce grave human rights abuses by the government of Israel against Palestinians,"¹⁸⁰ but Singh later told CIJA that he supports IHRA "in an educational sense."¹⁸¹ A grassroots policy resolution was submitted to the 2021 convention to officially oppose IHRA,¹⁸² but it never made it to a vote. Some NDP MPs were opposed to the idea of the motion itself; Charlie Angus tweeted: "it is not the role of a political convention to define what is or what is not [antisemitism]."¹⁸³ Nonetheless, IHRA has been explicitly opposed by NDP MPs including Matthew Green, Leah Gazan, and Don Davies.¹⁸⁴

Bloc Québécois

In 2016, the Bloc voted against the 2016 motion to condemn the BDS movement and its supporters. During debate, Bloc MP Monique Pauzé was the only representative to say that BDS was legitimate in itself (beyond a free speech principle), calling it "a citizens' response that is non-violent and not anti-Semitic," and "a democratic right of people who want to criticize a state's policies in a non-violent way."¹⁸⁵ However, other statements are contradictory. In May 2021, Bloc MP Stéphane Bergeron responded to Marc Garneau's categorical condemnation of BDS by saying "I could not agree more with

the minister.” In that same exchange, however, Bergeron noted the “strong movement” to boycott products from Israel, and said: “In light of this, would it not be a good idea, at least as a first step, not to consider products manufactured in the occupied territories as products of Israel?”¹⁸⁶ This leaves uncertainty as to what the party would support.

CJPME was unable to find any statement by the Bloc Québécois regarding IHRA.¹⁸⁷

Green Party

The Green party has a complicated history with the BDS movement. The party repeatedly rejected and denigrated the BDS movement under the leadership of Elizabeth May, who even threatened to resign after the membership passed a motion in support of BDS in 2016. Oddly, that motion was replaced with a “compromise” which still endorsed sanctions on Israel and was consistent with the goals of the BDS movement.¹⁸⁸ May called for an arms embargo against Israel in 2018, in response to Israeli violence against Palestinian protestors in Gaza,¹⁸⁹ and the party promoted the use of sanctions against Israeli annexation in 2020 (see the section in this guide). In terms of IHRA, May has regularly tweeted content critical of IHRA and its threat to free speech, including content from Independent Jewish Voices.

Under the new leadership of Annamie Paul, the Green Party’s official position vis-à-vis the BDS movement does not seem to have changed, yet Paul may prove to be more hostile to the movement than her predecessor. During the 2020 leadership race, Paul refused to answer CJPME’s questionnaire on issues including BDS and IHRA, but expressed her opposition to BDS and characterized the questions she received on these matters as antisemitic.¹⁹⁰ CJPME is not aware of any Green Party statements on IHRA, though Paul recently said that “criticism of Israel is not antisemitic” in a press conference.¹⁹¹

8 Canada's Response to Islamophobia / Réponse du Canada à l'islamophobie

CANADA' RESPONSE TO ISLAMOPHOBIA RÉPONSE DU CANADA À L'ISLAMOPHOBIE

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	B
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	D-
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A-
 Bloc Québécois	F
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	B+

Executive Summary

After years of relative inaction on Islamophobia, the Liberal government has recently taken steps to implement a few of the recommendations from the M-103 report. Still, the Liberal government's approach continues to be unnecessarily slow and low-key.

The Conservative party – including its current leader – has long down-played the issue of Islamophobia in Canada. The Conservative leader changed his tone on this issue in recent months, and has publicly acknowledged the issue of Islamophobia. However, the party overall has long taken positions which reflect an indifference toward the many challenges faced by Muslims in Canada.

Sommaire exécutif

Après des années d'inaction concernant l'islamophobie, le gouvernement libéral a récemment pris des mesures pour implémenter certaines des recommandations du rapport M-103. Mais l'approche du gouvernement libéral continue d'être inutilement lente et discrète.

Le Parti conservateur – incluant son chef actuel – a longtemps minimisé la question de l'islamophobie au Canada. Le chef du Parti conservateur a changé de ton sur la question ces derniers mois, et a reconnu publiquement la question de l'islamophobie. Néanmoins, le parti dans son ensemble a longtemps pris des positions qui reflètent une indifférence à l'égard

At all levels, the NDP has a longstanding and consistent record of calling for action to address the problem of Islamophobia in Canada. The only potential drawback to the NDP's approach is that their advocacy has included the promotion of expanding anti-terrorism tools against right-wing groups: an approach which may have unintended negative consequences.

The Bloc Québécois continues to dismiss incidents of Islamophobia, and to avoid the topic in general. This includes its continued support for Quebec's discriminatory Law 21, and its general ambivalence toward Islamophobic rhetoric in Quebec.

In general, when questioned on the issue, the Green Party has taken a progressive stance against Islamophobia. However, since the last election, the party has made little effort to prioritize the issue.

des nombreux défis auxquels sont confrontés les musulmans au Canada.

À tous les niveaux, le NPD demande depuis longtemps et de façon cohérente que des mesures soient prises pour faire face au problème de l'islamophobie au Canada. Le seul inconvénient potentiel de l'approche du NPD et que leur plaidoyer inclut la promotion des outils antiterroristes contre les groupes d'extrême droite : une approche qui pourrait avoir des conséquences négatives imprévues.

Le Bloc québécois continue de négliger les incidents islamophobes, et d'éviter le sujet en général. Cela inclut son soutien continue pour la loi québécoise discriminatoire, la loi 21. Et son ambivalence générale envers la rhétorique islamophobe au Québec.

En général, lorsque questionné sur la question, le Parti vert a adopté une position progressiste contre l'islamophobie. Néanmoins depuis les dernières élections, le parti a fait peu d'efforts pour prioriser la question.

Background

Islamophobia is the unfounded hostility towards Muslims and individuals who may be perceived as Muslim and has taken many forms over many years.¹⁹² Since 9/11 and the subsequent "War on Terror", there has been a clear increase in Islamophobia and Islamophobic rhetoric in Canada and the West. Such fear-mongering narratives have been perpetuated largely by right wing parties, populist leaders, and right-wing and xenophobic organizations, promoting narrow-minded worldviews and discriminatory perceptions of racialized groups.

In October 2016, Parliament quietly passed a motion condemning Islamophobia by unanimous consent. By early 2017, however, when MP Iqra Khalid introduced an anti-Islamophobia motion in Parliament (M-103), the topic had become highly polarizing and divisive. The motion received huge national attention when it was targeted by xenophobic candidates in the ongoing Conservative leadership race, and because the issue was debated just weeks after the 2017 Quebec City Mosque Massacre.

The rise in Islamophobia in Canada was understood to be the motivation behind motion M-103, but some politicians and right-wing leaders suggested that it gave Islamophobia excessive attention among other forms of religious discrimination. Others suggested the motion could pave the way to limits on freedom of expression "because criticism of Islam could be construed as Islamophobia." Right-wing

populists even declared it might “ultimately lead to legislative changes, including Shariah blasphemy laws.”¹⁹³

Motion M-103, however, was intended to bring attention to the challenges facing Canada’s Muslim community, along with broader issues of religious and systemic discrimination in Canada. For example, Muslim-Canadians face institutional barriers to employment and services and have even been banned from wearing religious symbols while working in the public sector in Quebec. Muslim-Canadians also face the threat of racist violence, including the most recent mortal attack on a Muslim family in London, Ontario in June 2021.¹⁹⁴

The M-103 report was released in 2018 and, among other recommendations, it was proposed that Canada form a national action plan to tackle Islamophobia. To date, however, most of the report’s recommendations have not been implemented.

Liberal Party

Under Justin Trudeau, the Liberal party has made several remarks condemning Islamophobia in Canada but has failed to take concrete action to support Muslim Canadians. In 2017, the Liberals supported motion M-103 (which condemned Islamophobia and all other forms of religious discrimination.) Since the resulting report and its recommendations have been released, the Liberal government has failed to implement most of the recommendations.

In late 2020, after resisting such calls for years, the Liberal government announced that January 29th, the anniversary of the Quebec City Mosque Massacre, would become an official day of remembrance and action against Islamophobia and other forms of religious discrimination.¹⁹⁵ Following the London attack in June 2021, which Justin Trudeau called an act of terrorism,¹⁹⁶ the Liberal government launched a National Summit on Islamophobia (back-to-back with a summit on antisemitism). It is too early to know whether any significant action will come out of this summit, but the Minister of National Revenue Diane Lebouthillier did request that the Office of the Taxpayers’ Ombudsperson (OTO) conduct an audit into alleged systemic discrimination against Muslim charities by the Canadian Revenue Agency.¹⁹⁷

Concerning Law 21, Quebec’s controversial secularism law which was adopted in 2019, Justin Trudeau previously said the federal government “might have to intervene [...] to protect minority rights,”¹⁹⁸ but he has not yet openly confronted the Quebec government of Premier Francois Legault. More recently, he announced that, “it’s up to the courts to decide the legality of the law.”¹⁹⁹

Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party has long downplayed the problem of Islamophobia in Canada. In 2016, the Conservative Party blocked a motion condemning all forms of Islamophobia, and in 2017, argued against motion M-103, citing there was no need to dedicate a motion to the issue. In its M-103 Minority report, the Conservatives recommended “that the government of Canada cease using the term ‘Islamophobia’ because of its inability to agree on the specific definition of the term.”²⁰⁰ Conservative MP Scott Reid introduced Motion M-153, which sought to name January 29th and a day to commemorate all victims of religion-based violence. The Conservative Party accepted this strategy by Reid to eclipse Islamophobia as the main motivating factor in the January 29, 2017 Quebec City Mosque Massacre.

Under the new leadership of Erin O’Toole, the Conservatives continue to avoid highlighting Islamophobia as a broad national issue, but have made some changes in tone. Despite having voted against Motion M-103, Erin O’Toole acknowledged Islamophobia as the motivation for the attack on the family in London, Ontario. Expressing his condolences in the House of Commons, O’Toole called it a terrorist attack and later, in a tweet, stated that “an Islamophobic act of terror like this has no place in Canada.”²⁰¹ Members of Canada’s Muslim community have expressed frustration at these comments, however, stating that O’Toole’s condolences have no weight considering his vote against Motion M-103, which condemned Islamophobia.²⁰²

New Democratic Party

The NDP has been consistent in its efforts to combat Islamophobia in Canada and has maintained the need for Canada to take concrete action on the matter. Under the leadership of Thomas Mulcair, the Party presented a motion on Islamophobia, which was passed unanimously in 2016. The NDP has voted for the adoption of Motion M-103 and has supported CJPME’s campaign to commemorate January 29th as a National Day of Action and Remembrance on Islamophobia.

Since the previous election, Jagmeet Singh has called for the Liberal government to “establish a National Action Plan to dismantle and tackle hate including Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism.”²⁰³ The NDP has also criticized the Liberal government for not tackling online hate citing that “instead of holding social media accountable, [Justin Trudeau] decided to trust social media companies with voluntary measures,” action the NDP feels is inadequate.²⁰⁴ On the anniversary of the January 29th attack, Singh expressed that Canada “must send a clear message that racism and Islamophobia are not welcome here.”²⁰⁵ After the attack on a London, Ontario family, the NDP party did its best to bring attention to the Islamophobic motivations for the attack. In his Parliamentary remarks, Jagmeet Singh implored his fellow Parliamentarians to refrain from saying the attack was “not Canada,” stating that “the reality is, our Canada is a place of racism, of violence, [...] and our Canada is a place where Muslims aren’t safe.”²⁰⁶

Of note, however, a major component of the NDP’s response to hate crimes and white supremacist violence has involved calls to designate certain extremist groups as “terrorist entities.”²⁰⁷ Such efforts to use or expand Canada’s anti-terrorism tools to address hate have been criticized by civil liberties organizations, on the grounds that such policies “have resulted in the criminalization and surveillance of Muslim communities in Canada.”²⁰⁸

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Quebecois has a history of Islamophobic remarks by its members. In the previous election, the Party came under fire after several candidates were discovered to have made several Islamophobic remarks on the internet.²⁰⁹ While Bloc leader Yves-Francois Blanchet has apologized for his candidates remarks, he has failed to take seriously the weight of Islamophobia and has not taken any meaningful action on the matter. For example, he had reservations about the importance of adopting January 29 as a National Day of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia and has expressed concern over the term “Islamophobia”, claiming the word has become ‘toxic’ and politically charged. Furthermore, Bloc House Leader Alain Therrien, who killed a unanimous consent motion on condemning racism, has been found to have promoted a blog post which argued that Muslims invented Islamophobia.²¹⁰ He also has a

history of dodging questions related to the existence of Islamophobia in Canada and the impact that his Party's Islamophobic rhetoric has had on the motivations of the January 29th terrorist.²¹¹

The party's tone on this issue has changed somewhat in recent months. Following the London attack in June 2021, Blanchet used the term "Islamophobia" when he told Parliament that "Islamophobia and all forms of racism must stop."²¹² However, Blanchet criticized Trudeau for drawing any connection between Quebec's Law 21 and the increase of Islamophobia, including the London attack.²¹³

Moreover, since the 2019 election, the Bloc Québécois has supported Quebec's Law 21, and continues to condone Islamophobic rhetoric. Most notably, after MP Omar Alghabra was appointed Minister of Transportation in 2021, Blanchet made Islamophobic remarks regarding the Minister's previous role as president of the Canadian Arab Federation. In a press release, the Bloc attacked Alghabra by stating that "there are questions being asked on the proximity of the new Minister of Transportation, Omar Alghabra, with the political Islamic movement."²¹⁴ When questioned on this inappropriate statement, rather than withdrawing it, the Bloc simply cited a right-wing Quebec newspaper column that made unsupported allegations about Alghabra, and called into question his commitment to secularism.²¹⁵ Although these aspersions against Alghabra clearly used Islamophobic innuendo, Blanchet has maintained that his questions were 'polite' and 'courteous' and has not apologized for his remarks,²¹⁶ and instead has blocked on Twitter anyone who criticized him, including CJPME.

Green Party

The Green party has previously expressed concerns over the increasing threat of Islamophobia in Canada, and supported the campaign for a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia. However, under the leadership of Elizabeth May, the issue was not prioritized. May even voted for the Conservative amendment to M-103, which would have removed the word 'Islamophobia,' thus diluting the Motion.

Under the new leadership of Annamie Paul, Islamophobia remains a backburner issue for the Greens, although Paul has occasionally highlighted the issue of Islamophobia. In 2020, after a Mosque in Toronto was temporarily closed due to violent and offensive threats,²¹⁷ she acknowledged that Muslim-Canadians were targeted because of xenophobic and anti-Muslim sentiment.²¹⁸ On the 4 year anniversary of the January 29th attack on a mosque in Quebec City, Paul posted a tweet reaffirming the Green Party's "commitment to speak out against Islamophobia."²¹⁹ After the fatal attack on a Muslim family in London, Ontario, Annamie Paul expressed a direct concern for Islamophobia, stating that the Greens "condemn this heinous act of terrorism" and expressed "support of the community's call for a national summit on Islamophobia."²²⁰ She has also stated that "the government has a duty to identify, expose and root out movements that promote discrimination and hate."²²¹ Finally, Paul has spoken out against Bill 21 as a violation against religious freedom, saying that "A Green government led by me would have intervened in support of the legal challenges to Bill 21."²²²

9 Canada’s Arms Trade and the Saudi Arms Deal / Commerce des armes au Canada et vente d’armes à l’Arabie saoudite

CANADA’S ARMS TRADE AND THE SAUDI ARMS DEAL

COMMERCE DES ARMES AU CANADA ET VENTE D’ARMES À L’ARABIE SAOUDITE

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	C-
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A
 Bloc Québécois	A
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	A

Executive Summary

The Liberal government continues to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, and has been dismissive of warnings by experts that Canadian exports are perpetuating Saudi’s war on Yemen. This is despite the fact that, under the Liberals, Canada acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty and claims to be vetting exports based on rigorous human rights criteria.

Conservatives have put profits ahead of human rights in a more explicit way, promising increased bilateral relationships with Saudi. The Harper government was the one which initiated the Saudi Arms Deal in the first place, and it refused

Sommaire exécutif

Le gouvernement libéral continue de vendre des armes à l’Arabie saoudite, et a ignoré les avertissements des experts selon lesquels les exportations canadiennes perpétuent la guerre saoudienne au Yémen. Et ce, malgré le fait que, sous les libéraux, le Canada a adhéré au Traité sur le commerce des armes et prétend contrôler les exportations sur base de critères rigoureux en matière de droits de la personne.

Les conservateurs ont fait passer les profits avant les droits de la personne de manière plus explicite, en promettant d’accroître les relations bilatérales avec l’Arabie saoudite. C’est le

to sign the Arms Trade Treaty throughout its tenure, despite compelling reasons to do so.

The NDP, Bloc, and Green parties have consistently opposed the Saudi Arms deal for years, calling for a suspension of arms to the country. All three parties supported Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, and have called for its implementation to be strengthened.

gouvernement Harper qui est à l'origine de la vente d'armes à l'Arabie saoudite, et il a refusé de signer le Traité sur le commerce des armes pendant toute la durée de son mandat, malgré des raisons impérieuses de le faire.

Le NPD, le Bloc et le Parti vert se sont constamment opposé à la vente d'armes à l'Arabie saoudite ces dernières années, demandant une suspension de vente d'armes à l'Arabie saoudite. Ils soutiennent également l'adhésion du Canada au Traité sur le commerce des armes, et demandent que sa mise en œuvre soit renforcée.

Background

Canada has sold billions in weapons to Saudi Arabia in recent years, most of it related to a deal for light armoured vehicles (LAVs) which was signed in 2014 by the Harper government. In 2019, arms exports to Saudi Arabia accounted for 76% of all weapons sales, unseating the U.S. as Canada's biggest arms customer.²²³ These exports have continued despite longstanding opposition from civil society organizations, arms trade experts, and opposition political parties. The consternation over the issue relates to Saudi Arabia's brutal and longstanding war in Yemen which has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. In 2020, a UN investigation by Eminent Experts named Canada among a handful of countries whose arms exports were helping to "perpetuate the conflict" in Yemen.²²⁴

The continued sale of arms to Saudi Arabia demonstrates the weakness of Canada's arms control regime. Canada became a state party to the International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2019, years after most of its Western allies.²²⁵ In theory, the ATT prohibits the sale of weapons systems and arms to human rights abusers and requires exporting countries to carefully control the sale and delivery of arms.²²⁶ The Treaty is designed to eliminate the illicit arms market, and to prevent arms from being sold to human rights abusers. When Canada's accession to the ATT was being debated, arms trade experts pointed out numerous flaws with the ratifying legislation and suggested that Canada's accession did not respect the intents of the Treaty. A case in point, in August 2021, a legal analysis by Amnesty International and Project Ploughshares found that Canada's internal assessment of its exports to Saudi Arabia – which declared that the exports posed no risk to human rights – was "fundamentally flawed," and that Canada was failing to comply with its international obligations under the ATT.²²⁷

Liberal Party

Since coming to power in 2015, the Liberals have repeatedly refused to cancel the \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. Although the deal had been signed by the previous Conservative government, it was Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion in the new Liberal government who made the final decision to approve the export permits.²²⁸ Following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018, the Liberals imposed a moratorium on *new* export permits to Saudi Arabia, but allowed the continuation of LAV

exports on the basis that their export permits had already been approved.²²⁹ During the 2019 election, Trudeau defended his government's position, blaming the previous government: "We continue to defend hard working Canadians in London who have worked hard on this contract that Stephan Harper signed, that has massive penalties if we get out of."²³⁰

In general, the Liberals have been criticized for their lacklustre approach to regulating the arms trade, despite introducing Bill C-47 to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which came into force in 2019. From the start, Bill C-47 was criticized for failing to meeting the standards of the ATT. Nonetheless, since the ratification of the ATT in Canada, the Liberals have claimed that they are doing a good job enforcing the treaty. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has boasted that "human rights concerns are now at the centre of our export regime," and claims that "[he] will deny any permit application where there is a risk of human rights violations."²³¹

This professed commitment to human rights is contradicted by the Liberal government's decision to greenlight to arms exports to Saudi Arabia. In early 2020, Justin Trudeau lifted the moratorium on new export permits, citing significant "improvements" to the LAV deal. The Global Affairs department's own internal analysis concluded that that there was "no substantial risk" that LAVs being exported to Saudi Arabia would be used to violate International Humanitarian Law,²³² but this analysis has subsequently been criticized by Amnesty International and Project Ploughshares as "fundamentally flawed" (see above Background section). Following that recent report, a Global Affairs spokesperson maintained that Canada is "is committed to a rigorous arms export system" and that it denies permits where there is a human rights risk.²³³

In fact, the Liberals have downplayed the human rights concerns involved in the Saudi arms deal. Instead of taking action to mitigate the risk to human rights, Garneau claims his department has "worked hard to improve the contract" and "preserve jobs within Canada."²³⁴ In an interview on CBC radio, the Canadian ambassador to the U.N., Bob Rae dismissed the UN expert report on Yemen by describing LAVs as 'Jeeps' and falsely claiming that Canada was not supplying arms to the conflict.²³⁵

Only four Liberal MPs have made public statements expressing opposition to the Saudi arms deal, including Alexandra Mendès, Adam Vaughan, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, and Jenica Atwin (when she was a former Green MP).²³⁶

Conservative Party of Canada

Instead of expressing concern over Canada's arms deals with Saudi Arabia, the Conservative Party has vowed to cultivate relations with the Saudis if it brightened prospects for Canadian trade. During the 2019 federal election, while serving as the Conservative Party's foreign affairs critic, Erin O'Toole promised that a Conservative government would work to repair Canada's relationship with Saudi Arabia, referencing a deterioration in diplomatic relations in late 2018 following Canada's criticism of Jamal Khashoggi's murder. O'Toole claimed that this would improve Canada's ability to criticize the country: "If you have zero relationship, we're basically just yelling into the wind. We're not having any impact on them."²³⁷

Regarding accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, Erin O'Toole and the Conservatives opposed Canada's ratification of the ATT and related arms control legislation (Bill C-47) in 2018, suggesting falsely that it might infringe on the rights of Canadian firearm owners.²³⁸

The party's position on arms sales to Saudi Arabia hasn't changed since O'Toole became party leader. In Parliament, he accused parties which opposed the Saudi arms deal of failing to support Canadian private industry.²³⁹

New Democratic Party

The NDP has opposed the Saudi Arms deal for years,²⁴⁰ and has tried to strengthen legislation to regulate weapons sales. In the previous parliamentary session, the NDP warned that Bill-C-47 featured many loopholes for arms exports, and that it therefore failed to meet the standards of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Citing issues with Canadian weapons being diverted to Saudi's war on Yemen, the NDP proposed an amendment to the Bill that would have required Canada to "reassess existing arms export permits should new information about human rights abuses come to light."²⁴¹ After this amendment was voted down by the Liberal government, the NDP called on the government to withdraw the Bill and work with experts to submit legislation that would fully comply with the ATT.²⁴²

The NDP has maintained its position on arms sales to Saudi Arabia since the last election. After the Liberal government announced an end to the arms sales moratorium in 2020, NDP MP Don Davies noted the contradiction that is apparent when "Canada says it support UN's call for global ceasefire, and at the same time [ends] a moratorium, which permits military vehicles to be exported to Saudi Arabia."²⁴³ Foreign Affairs critic Jack Harris has similarly noted how Canada purports to have "strong human rights interests internationally, yet Saudi Arabia's human rights violations are appalling and Canada continues to sell it arms."²⁴⁴

In February 2021, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh reiterated the call for the Liberal government to end all arms sales to Saudi Arabia, saying "there is a time when the clear human rights violations perpetrated by a country make it so we cannot sell them arms."²⁴⁵ In parliament, NDP MP Heather McPherson said that "Canada's foreign policy is so incoherent that Canada was condemned by the United Nations for contributing to grave human rights abuses," and asked Minister Garneau: "Will the government stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia?"²⁴⁶ The party also shared a petition arguing that Canada should not be selling arms to human rights abusers including Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Sudan, and Libya.²⁴⁷ In June 2021, NDP MP Matthew Green sponsored a parliamentary e-petition calling for suspension of arms sales to Saudi Arabia.²⁴⁸

Bloc Québécois

The BQ was an early opponent of the LAV deal with Saudi Arabia, making it an important part of their election campaign in 2015²⁴⁹ and pressing the Liberal government on it in 2016.²⁵⁰ In 2018, BQ MPs continued to call on Canada end the LAV contract with Saudi Arabia, noting the assassination of Khashoggi and the crisis and Yemen.²⁵¹ The BQ has always supported Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Speaking on the many shortcomings of Bill C-47 in 2017, MP Luc Thériault questioned "the point of ratifying a treaty if a country [Canada] does not respect either the letter or the spirit of that treaty."²⁵²

Since the 2019 election, the party has repeatedly pressed the government on the quality of its human rights review and the decision in 2020 to lift the moratorium on arms exports to Saudi Arabia. For example, the BQ's foreign affairs critic Stephane Bergeron questioned the report used by Foreign Affairs

Minister Marc Garneau to justify lifting the moratorium, noting that it was “clearly designed to support and legitimize the lifting of the moratorium.”²⁵³ Bergeron has also criticized the government for not setting up an advisory panel of “independent experts to review best practices in arms exports of states party to the Arms Trade Treaty to ensure that export controls were as robust as possible.”²⁵⁴

Green Party

In previous years, then-GPC leader Elizabeth May frequently called out Canada’s arms deal with Saudi Arabia,²⁵⁵ and as early as 2016 tried to pass a resolution calling for an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia due to its actions in Yemen.²⁵⁶ May had also been a principled supporter of the arms control legislation Bill C-47, urging the closure of loopholes and countering misinformation from Conservative critics.²⁵⁷

Since the 2019 election, the Green Party has mentioned its opposition to arms sales to Saudi in several press releases,²⁵⁸ and Green MP Paul Manly responded to the UN report in 2020 by tweeting: “Canada needs to stop selling weapons that feed these conflicts. The arms sales to Saudi Arabia should have been halted. Peace before profits.”²⁵⁹

Annamie Paul has not spoken about Saudi Arabia or Yemen since becoming GPC leader. However, in 2019 as international affairs critic, she argued that Canada should be “actively seeking to loosen its economic ties with (Saudi Arabia),” including halting oil imports and ending arms sales.²⁶⁰

10 Nuclear Arms and the Middle East / Armes nucléaires et Moyen-Orient

NUCLEAR ARMS AND THE MIDDLE EAST ARMES NUCLÉAIRES ET MOYEN-ORIENT

Assessment / Évaluation

 Liberal Party of Canada / Parti libéral du Canada	F
 Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada	F
 New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique	A
 Bloc Québécois	A
 Green Party of Canada / Parti Vert du Canada	A

Executive Summary

Since the 1990s, Canada’s Liberal and Conservative governments have voted to veto attempts to strengthen controls on nuclear arms through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Because of such votes by Canada and other countries, the NPT has failed to lead to the disarming of nuclear powers, and has failed to discourage non-nuclear countries from seeking to develop nuclear technology. Partly out of frustration with the ineffectiveness of the NPT, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was launched by non-nuclear powers in in 2021.

Not only did the Liberal government refused to sign the TPNW when it was launched, but it failed to participate in negotiations to define the treaty.

Sommaire exécutif

Depuis les années 90, les gouvernements libéraux et conservateurs du Canada ont voté pour opposer leur véto aux tentatives visant à renforcer les contrôles sur les armes nucléaires par le biais du Traité sur la non-prolifération des armes nucléaires (TNP). À cause de ces votes du Canada et d’autres pays, le TNP n’a pas réussi à conduire au désarmement des puissances nucléaires, ni à décourager les pays non nucléaires de chercher à développer la technologie nucléaire. En partie à cause de la frustration causée par l’inefficacité du TNP, le Traité sur l’interdiction des armes nucléaires (TIAN) a été lancé par des puissances non nucléaires en 2021.

The Liberals, instead, have insisted that they are committed to a nuclear free world, but that they support intermediate steps as an alternative to the TPNW process, which they boycotted.

The Conservatives oppose TPNW and have been dismissive of it.

The NDP, Bloc, and Greens have supported the TPNW for years, and have consistently urged the Canadian government to sign on.

Le gouvernement a non seulement refusé de signer le TIAN à son lancement, mais il a également échoué à participer aux négociations pour définir le traité. Les libéraux ont plutôt insisté sur le fait qu'ils s'engageaient en faveur d'un monde sans nucléaire, mais qu'ils soutiennent les étapes intermédiaires comme alternative au processus du TIAN, qu'ils ont boycotté.

Les conservateurs s'opposent au TIAN et l'ont dédaigné.

Le NPD, le Parti vert et le Bloc ont soutenu le TIAN durant des années, et ont à de nombreuses reprises exhorté le gouvernement canadien à le signer.

Background

Since the Cold War era, nuclear powers have tried to use the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the basis for access to nuclear technology. Under the NPT, however, the underlying premise was that the nuclear powers would eventually decommission their nuclear arms. As the decades passed, non-nuclear countries became increasingly disillusioned with the NPT as a vehicle for disarmament, as the nuclear powers failed to disarm, and as enforcement of the NPT appeared highly selective, notably around the question of Israel's nuclear arms.

Israel possesses nuclear weapons but does not officially acknowledge so.²⁶¹ This creates much consternation among Israel's Middle East neighbours, and is part of the motivation for Iran and others in the region to pursue nuclear technology.

In 1974, Iran and Egypt formally introduced a resolution for a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East²⁶² - a resolution which would put pressure on Israel to destroy its nuclear arsenal. Over subsequent years, many non-nuclear countries conditioned their support for the NPT on passage of this second resolution for an NWFZ in the Middle East. In 1995, for example, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference adopted a resolution which called upon states to take the necessary measures to ensure the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East.²⁶³ This 1995 resolution was subsequently reaffirmed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, where states again called for a regional conference to be held on this matter in 2012. But both in the 1990s, and following the 2010 NPT review conference, the US, Canada and other Western powers derailed the promised conferences for a NWFZ in the Middle East.²⁶⁴ This behaviour by Canada and Western nuclear powers around the NPT continues to this day.²⁶⁵

In 2017, frustrated by the NPT's ability to bring any change to the status quo, non-nuclear countries at the UN organized a conference for General Assembly members to convene and "negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination."²⁶⁶ This

resulted in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a “comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapons activities.”²⁶⁷ Under the TPNW, activities including testing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, using, and threatening to use nuclear weapons are considered illegal.²⁶⁸ The Treaty was adopted by the UN in 2017 and entered into force on January 22, 2021.²⁶⁹

Canada did not participate in the drafting of the treaty, nor has it signed the treaty. Canada’s opposition to this Treaty is tied to Canada’s close relationship with the US, Canada’s membership in NATO, and Canada’s desire to provide diplomatic cover for Israel. As a NATO member, Canada has endorsed statements from NATO which support the retention and potential use of nuclear weapons by NATO’s three nuclear powers: the United States, France and the United Kingdom.²⁷⁰

States that already possess nuclear weapons, namely the United States and Israel, yield enormous power in the Middle East. By blindly supporting the NPT and rejecting the TPNW, Canada commits to the continuation of a status quo where the world, and especially the Middle East, face the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons. Supporting a NWFZ in the Middle East, or signing the TPNW, would diminish the power of nuclear states and would pave the way for a less militarized and non-violent future.

Liberal Party

Since the Liberals came to power in 2015, Canada has continued to vote in lock-step with its Western nuclear powers to avoid any formal discussions around a NWFZ in the Middle East. While these votes in international forums rarely make news in Canada, they are part of a broader strategy by the Liberal government to provide diplomatic cover for Israel and belligerence toward the Palestinians and its neighbours.

Regarding the TPNW, Justin Trudeau voted with the United States and other NATO members in 2016 to oppose the UN resolution which initiated the Treaty negotiations, and chose not to attend the initial conference the following year.²⁷¹ In 2017, Liberal MPs voted down an Opposition Motion by the NDP to support the TPNW process;²⁷² during debate, Liberal MPs insisted that they supported an eventual ban on nuclear weapons, but only as a “final step in a progressive step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament.”²⁷³ Trudeau said in Question Period that since nuclear states were not involved in the TPNW process that it was “useless,” and instead pointed to Canada’s role in advocating for intermediate steps, like a fissile material cut-off treaty.²⁷⁴ In December 2020, Canada voted against a UN resolution encouraging states to sign and ratify TPNW, and then the following month claimed that Canada is “committed to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.”²⁷⁵

Contradicting the government’s official position, Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith has said that Canada should sign the TPNW, saying: “we know we aren’t going to see the end of the possession of nuclear weapons in the short term but is it incredibly important that the world stigmatizes and delegitimizes the use of these weapons and the possession of these weapons going forward.”²⁷⁶

Conservative Party of Canada

Under the Conservative government to Stephen Harper, Canada voted in international forums in support of the status quo vis-à-vis the NPT, and voted to veto all efforts to enable a regional conference on a nuclear free weapons zone in the Middle East.

Regarding the TPNW, the Conservative Party voted against the NDP's 2017 Opposition Motion to support the TPNW process.²⁷⁷ During the debate, Conservative MP Peter Kent claimed to support the goal of a nuclear-free world but pointed to the non-participation of nuclear states to dismiss the TPNW as a "wishful-thinking talkathon."²⁷⁸ CJPME is not aware of other relevant statements the party has made on this issue.

New Democratic Party

The New Democratic Party has been a strong supporter of the TPNW. In 2017, NDP foreign affairs critic H  l  ne Laverdi  re sponsored an Opposition Motion urging Canada's participation in the TPNW process.²⁷⁹ In co-moving the debate, NDP MP Linda Duncan said: "For the sake of our children, for the sake of the planet, we implore the government to step forward to join the efforts of nations threatened by nuclear weapons, not those determined to retain and potentially deploy them."²⁸⁰

On the day that the TPNW came into force in January 2021, NDP foreign affairs critic Jack Harris issued a statement again urging Canada to sign the treaty. He called it "a bold step towards peace and security," and said that "a nuclear-weapon-free world is possible, but it requires courageous action by leaders and countries, like Canada."²⁸¹ The previous day, NDP MP Heather McPherson chaired a multi-partisan press conference calling on Canada to sign the TPNW.²⁸²

Bloc Qu  b  cois

The Bloc Qu  becois voted in support of the NDP's 2017 Opposition Motion to support the TPNW process,²⁸³ but CJPME was not able to find other relevant statements from this time.

In 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Bloc caucus published a statement urging Canada to sign the TPNW, noting that "the Bloc Qu  b  cois will continue to fight for a more secure world, free from the threat of nuclear weapons."²⁸⁴ On the day before the TPNW came into force in January 2021, Bloc MP Alexis-Brunelle Duceppe attended a cross-party press conference and said that signing the treaty could send a strong message to the United States saying: "But for that, we have to start a conversation with them, and we have to lead this thing."²⁸⁵

Green Party

Green MP and party leader Elizabeth May voted in support of the NDP's 2017 Opposition Motion to support the TPNW process,²⁸⁶ asking: "Why on earth is Canada not at the table ... working to raise the political momentum towards getting rid of nuclear weapons?"²⁸⁷ MP May frequently brought up the issue in various forums that year. For example, in Question Period she asked the government why it did not participate in the TPNW conference, asking for assurance that "Canada will play a leading role once again to band with the world to end the threat of nuclear war."²⁸⁸

In November 2020, ahead of the TPNW coming into force, MP May stated in Parliament that "shamefully, it enters into force without Canada," and urged Canada to sign and ratify the treaty.²⁸⁹ Canada's failure to support the treaty was also raised by Green MP Paul Manly.²⁹⁰ In January 2021, the Green Party released a statement calling on "Canada to sign and ratify the treaty."²⁹¹ It quoted Elizabeth May, no longer party leader, as saying: "Canada led the way on the Ottawa Process to ban landmines -

even though we do not manufacture or use landmines. In the same way, as a non-nuclear weapons state, we must work to eliminate nuclear weapons.”²⁹²

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