

Dear Toronto Star,

As Jewish women concerned with global justice, we are writing to express shock and anger at the recent decision by the Canadian government to defund Kairos. This vital human rights organization does invaluable work in countries around the world, including the Congo, the Philippines, Colombia, Sudan, as well as in the Middle East. Kairos furthers what we have always believed to be Canadian goals of supporting human rights around the globe. Sadly, the Canada we once could feel proud of on the international front is being systematically shredded and on so many fronts Canada's international reputation is in tatters. To defund Kairos continues to tear at the fabric of Canada's heart and leaves many people around the globe at risk.

It is unthinkable that one of the reasons being given for the defunding of this honourable organization is an accusation of anti-semitism. Used in this manipulative fashion, the accusation aims to silence any criticism of the state of Israel and draws attention away from the deplorable funding cuts this government is making.

To call Kairos anti-semitic is devastating to us as Jews. Kairos is not anti-semitic, they are just one of many organizations and individuals working towards a just peace in the Middle East. Deeming their actions anti-semitic, devalues the term, and leaves us as Jews vulnerable in the times when real anti-semitism occurs. We deplore the defunding of Kairos, and the misuse of this accusation. As Jews, and as Canadian citizens concerned with global justice, we strongly urge that Kairos be refunded and allowed to continue its important work.

Lois Fine & Rachel Epstein