

## **Dec 23, 2009 Response to Some Questions Raised.**

### **Canadian government's accusation that KAIROS is anti-Semitic and led "the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel."**

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, Canada's Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney made a speech in Jerusalem to The Global Forum to Counter Anti-Semitism. He spoke of genocide, violence and threats to destroy Israel. In addressing how his government plans to fight anti-Semitism, he said the Government of Canada cut funding to KAIROS for leading "the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel."

Minister Kenney's statement that KAIROS took "a leadership role in the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign" against Israel is false.

KAIROS' eleven member churches and organizations, voting as KAIROS board of directors decided in 2007 against "advocating sanctions against Israel or a boycott of products from Israel". KAIROS agreed that divestment from a Canadian corporation invested in Israel, the West Bank or Gaza that is "contributing directly or indirectly to violence, occupation or other human rights abuses in the region" is an action that its Member churches and organizations may choose. However, divestment should be a "last resort" after several stages of corporate engagement from dialogue with senior management to filing shareholder proposals. This is in keeping with KAIROS corporate engagement in other countries where partners are working to counter human rights abuses.

(The full KAIROS discussion paper on Economic Advocacy Measures can be downloaded here: [http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/HRTrade/Pal-Isr/Paper\\_EconomicAdvocacyMeasures\\_Jan08.pdf](http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/HRTrade/Pal-Isr/Paper_EconomicAdvocacyMeasures_Jan08.pdf) )

KAIROS has a fundamental position of support for the right of the Israeli people to a safe and secure state, alongside a viable and secure Palestinian state. KAIROS works for peaceful resolution of conflict and to defend human rights, with special focus on countries where we have had long-established and funded partnerships.

KAIROS has criticized specific actions of Israeli governments just as we have criticized actions of governments in other countries where we support groups working to counter human rights abuses.

In the face the struggle against genuine anti-Semitism, labeling critics of Israeli government actions as anti-Semitic silences democratic debate and honours no one.

### **KAIROS Message for the Season**

The world must act now, with responsibility and conscience, to help achieve a comprehensive just peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

The Government of Canada should use its diplomatic and moral authority to promote further dialogue and action for peace.

At Christmas, may people of goodwill continue to promote justice with words of peace.