



Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives /
Initiatives œcuméniques
canadiennes pour
la justice

Members

The Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for
Development and Peace
Canadian Conference of
Catholic Bishops
Canadian Religious Conference
Christian Reformed Church in
North America (Canada Corporation)
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Canada
Mennonite Central Committee
Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
The Primate's World Relief and
Development Fund
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The United Church of Canada

Membres

Assemblée annuelle canadienne
de la Société religieuse des Amis
Conférence des évêques
catholiques du Canada
Comité Central Mennonite Canada
Conférence religieuse canadienne
Développement et Paix
L'Église anglicane du Canada
Église Évangélique Luthérienne
au Canada
L'Église presbytérienne au Canada
L'Église réformée chrétienne en
Amérique du Nord
(Société canadienne)
L'Église Unie du Canada
Le fonds du Primate pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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Dear staff, board and supporters of B'Tselem

On behalf of our eleven member churches, KAIROS Canada writes to express its support and solidarity as you face government efforts to limit and impugn your work. We have long been partners with Palestinian and Israeli groups committed to a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. We are honoured to stand in partnership with them, and to stand in solidarity with groups like B'Tselem.

There have been many instances where our own education and advocacy work has drawn on the excellent research conducted by B'Tselem. We thank you for that work, which is much needed, carefully done, and extremely valuable.

We stand in agreement with your response to the Israeli government: "We are proud of our work to promote human rights in the Occupied Territories, which is conducted legally and with complete transparency. Persecution and attempts at silencing will not stop us. In a democracy, criticism of the government is not only legitimate – it is essential."

In the past year, KAIROS Canada learned what it is like to confront inaccurate accusations and deliberate threats to funding. This took the form of a total cut to the government share of funding to our global partners, and accusations made by a Canadian government official speaking in Jerusalem that KAIROS' work on Israel/ Palestine is "anti-Semitic". Groups across Canada have faced government criticism and targeted funding cuts. With B'Tselem and like-minded Israeli and Palestinian civil society groups, we affirm the urgent need for informed, transparent, democratic debate on matters of human rights and social justice in our societies.

We thus feel a particular affinity with the pressures currently faced by both Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. Like you, we refuse to be silenced. In this we take our lead from our partners, who ask us to continue speak out for a just peace, and to speak out about Canadian policies that have the result of justifying the Occupation and settlements and work against future possibilities for true peace. Our Israeli partner, Bat Shalom, reminds us that words of truth spoken by groups like yourself and many others are urgently needed by both Palestinian and Israeli societies.

We agree with you that "the right to dissent is the foundation of democracy" and strongly affirm your invitation to the Israeli Knesset to examine your

research and bring these legitimate human rights concerns to the attention of Israeli politicians and public alike.

For our part, KAIROS will continue to support democratic debate and human rights research, and stand with all who long for just peace in Canada, Palestine, Israel, and beyond.

In our tradition, we say: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”. Long may B’Tselem work in the service of truth and peace.

In solidarity,

Mary Corkery,
Executive Director,
KAIROS
www.kairoscanada.org