

November 17, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

Thank you for writing yesterday and for your remarks in response to our letter of October 18th, in which we urged you to call for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and for the opening of a humanitarian corridor to allow potable water, food, medical care and more to reach the people of Gaza. Thank you for your decisions and statements made in recent days, reiterating the importance of both Israel and Hamas respecting international law, ensuring the swift and unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid, and of protecting Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Thank you for evacuating Canadian citizens to safety.

Much has happened in the weeks since our last letter. The siege of Gaza has worsened, resulting in the deaths of more than 11,400 Gazans, including 4,700 children. All hospitals in Gaza City are now closed, as hundreds of thousands of people require medical care. More than one million Palestinians have now been forcibly displaced into smaller and smaller areas in southern Gaza, where humanitarian aid remains at critically low levels. Israeli settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has increased dramatically, and East Jerusalemites live in fear and danger of racist attacks, including assaults upon Christians and Church leaders.

We repeat our appeal of October 18th and urge you to call for a ceasefire.

We express in the strongest terms, our shame and deep disappointment in Canada's recent voting against United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions. While we welcome Canada's renewed support for the November 9th UNGA resolution on Palestinian refugees, this lone vote is insufficient. In that same meeting, Canada voted against four other resolutions, including two supporting Palestine refugees and one condemning Israeli settlements.

We join many other Canadian voices asking how Canada's voting on these resolutions indicates a serious commitment to addressing the human catastrophe that Israel is creating in Gaza. We ask why, as a state supporter of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Canada has failed to directly condemn Israel for its attacks on UNRWA schools, which have killed over 90 UNRWA staff. Of the more than 1.5 million

Palestinians in Gaza that have been forcibly displaced since October 7, many thousands are sheltering in UNRWA facilities, which have been repeatedly bombed.

The resolutions which Canada voted against on November 9th session include:

1. A resolution which recognizes UNRWA and urges the international community to support its work. It passed 160-4.
2. A resolution which reaffirms that Palestinian refugees are entitled to their property and asks the UN to protect Arab assets and property rights in Israel. It passed 156-6.
3. A resolution to condemn Israel's illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. It passed 145-7.

It is shocking to us that Canada would vote in support of Israeli settlements in a year of unprecedented settlement expansion, and as attacks by Israeli settlers and soldiers have forcibly displaced at least 15 herding communities in the West Bank. This vote belies Canada's official policy against illegal settlements. Israel's ongoing colonization of Palestinian land is directly creating new refugees, with Canada's support.

Mr. Prime Minister, why is there no room in Canada's contribution toward ending this conflict and responding fully to the needs for humanitarian aid to recognize both Hamas' egregious actions and the decades of Israel's illegal and violent military occupation of Palestinian Territories in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem? Surely Canada's political leaders have the moral courage and conviction to say to both Israel and Hamas 'enough is enough', in the interests of peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians.

We pray for an immediate ceasefire, for a release of hostages, and an end to Israel's occupation of all Palestinian Territories. We pray for those in authority that their decisions and actions bear the fruit of peace, justice and sanctity of all life for Palestinians and Israelis. We pray for our Christian partners in the Land of the Holy One, and their Muslim and Jewish neighbours who inspire the world with their steadfast hope and faithfulness.



Bishop Susan Johnson
National Bishop,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls
Archbishop & Primate,
Anglican Church of Canada

cc. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Official Opposition Pierre.Poilievre@parl.gc.ca

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of New Democratic Party Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca
Yves-François Blanchet MP, Leader of the Bloc Québécois Yves-Francois.Blanchet@parl.gc.ca
Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca
Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca
Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca
David DaSilva Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority
David.DaSilva@international.gc.ca
Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem bishop@j-diocese.org
Bishop Sani Azar, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
bishopazar@elcjh.org
Archbishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglican Communion
Raquel.hitchman@lambethpalace.org.uk
Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt, General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation
Anne.Burghardt@lutheranworld.org