

Canada Presses Smaller Countries to Oppose Palestinian Statehood

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Montreal, June 29, 2011 — According to a June 24 New York Times article, Canada has been lobbying smaller countries to oppose a Palestinian bid for UN members' support for Palestinian statehood. The US, Canada, Italy, Germany and several central European countries are poised to oppose the bid, while Spain, France and most Latin American countries intend to support it; the UK is wavering. Although the Security Council's recommendation on membership carries considerable weight, the UN General Assembly is the ultimate arbiter of requests for UN membership.

As a member of the G8 and OECD, Canada may have considerable influence with smaller countries. Many of the latter, reeling from the international recession, are seeking debt relief and easier access to overseas markets, including Canada's. The Harper government has not formally renounced long-standing Canadian policy supporting the creation of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. Nonetheless, at the recent G8 meeting, Prime Minister Harper opposed the inclusion of any reference to the importance of the 1967 borders in the G8's statement on the Middle East. Since the G8, the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister John Baird and other high ranking officials have been visiting Greece, Brazil, Paraguay and Guatemala, among other countries.

"Rather than urging other countries to deny Palestinians a state, Canada should be pressing Israel to stop violating international law," says Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East President Thomas Woodley. CJPME notes that the Palestinians are resorting to a UN bid for support for a state because Israel's multiple violations of international law have derailed direct peace talks. Israel has intensified the construction of illegal colonies in the occupied Palestinian territories and continued a sweeping blockade of Gaza, both of which violate international law.

International support for the Palestinian bid at the UN has grown steadily. In early 2011, the support of the majority of UN General Assembly members seemed likely. However, support is still far from certain. Palestinian officials will soon visit Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries that have yet to endorse the Palestinian bid. Palestinian ambassadors will be meeting in Madrid in July to strategize on their approach to the crucial European Union member states.

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