

Canadian Citizens in Gaza Abandoned Under Canada's Two-tier Evacuation Plan

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

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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is expressing extreme concern over the Canadian government's failure to secure evacuation for citizens stuck in Gaza and the West Bank. While Canada has already completed four evacuation flights for its citizens in Israel, it has yet to secure plans for its own citizens in the occupied Palestinian territories, despite the catastrophic humanitarian situation. Israel told Canadian officials earlier today that they had [decided against](#) proposals to allow foreign nationals to flee Gaza via Egypt. This leaves at least 150 Canadian citizens trapped by Israel alongside more than 2 million Palestinians, without any relief or safety from Israeli siege and bombardment.

CJPME insists that Canada immediately implement some of the following measures to ensure the safety of Canadian citizens – and other civilians – in the occupied Palestinian territories:

- Canada must demand that Israel lift the siege of Gaza, and enable the restoration of electricity, cell phone, and internet service, thus allowing Canadians to expediently access consular and (eventual) evacuation services;
- Canada must use its political ties with Israel to guarantee the safe evacuation of Canadian citizens, ensuring they are not harmed as they seek to evacuate;
- Canada must push Israel to waive its racially discriminatory policies and allow Palestinian Canadians to access evacuation efforts via Tel Aviv;
- Canada must push Israel to respect international law and cease all military action which endangers Gaza civilians; not only Canadian citizens, but all Palestinians under Israeli bombardment, siege, and mass displacement.

CJPME points out that the difficulty in evacuating Palestinians with Canadian citizenship is a direct result of Israel's system of apartheid, which prevents Palestinians from reaching the airport in Tel Aviv based on nationality. "Canadians in Gaza are facing unthinkably horrific circumstances, and feel abandoned by the Canadian government," said Michael Bueckert,

Vice President of CJPME. CJPME and many others are disappointed that Canada hasn't bothered to leverage its strong political ties to Israel to enable Canadian citizens to leave. "Regardless of the best efforts and intentions of Canada's consular staff, by working within this context of institutionalized discrimination Canada is effectively forced to treat a segment of its own citizens as second-class," added Bueckert.

Canadian officials say that about 150 people in Gaza have registered for assistance. On Friday, it was [announced](#) that there would be a "tentative window" of several hours the next day for evacuating citizens alongside other foreign nationals from Gaza. It was emphasized that these plans are not confirmed, and that Canadians must be ready to leave at a moment's notice. Early Saturday, the CBC [reported](#) that Israeli officials have notified various embassies that the window of opportunity had been "cancelled," instructing foreign nationals to stay away from the crossing.

Even before the latest update, CJPME had noted that Israel's "total siege" of Gaza has made enrollment in any Canadian evacuation virtually impossible for citizens in Gaza, given that Israel has shut off electricity, which has severely restricted all cell phone and internet access. Above all, CJPME is deeply concerned about the ability of Canadians to travel to any evacuation points, given Israel's repeated [bombings](#) of the Rafah crossing and [reports](#) of Israeli airstrikes killing at least 70 Palestinians who were attempting to evacuate the northern area of Gaza.

Most Canadian citizens with Palestinian IDs are barred from travelling to Tel Aviv based on their nationality. Those in the West Bank are forced to travel by land to Jordan where they would catch a commercial flight. Those trying to move in and out of Egypt face extraordinary barriers, with severely limited travel through Egypt. On the other hand, Canadian citizens living in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank have had [little problem](#) reaching the Tel Aviv airport, while Palestinians in the same territory are denied this right.

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Featured image: Palestinian Marwa al-Tamimi, 32 carries the body of her 2-year-old son Mohammed al-Tamimi during his funeral at the West Bank village of Nebi Saleh, northwest of Ramallah, June 6, 2023

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