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Does Justin Trudeau Hate Palestinians?

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Is Justin Trudeau a racist? He and his government certainly accept and promote anti-Palestinianism. Two recent moves reaffirm his government's pattern of blaming Palestinians for their dispossession and subjugation.

Last week the government released its updated terrorist list. An eighth Palestinian organization was added and the International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy (IRFAN) was re-designated. The first ever Canadian-based group designated a terrorist organization, IRFAN was listed by the Stephen Harper government for engaging in the ghastly act of supporting orphans and a hospital in the Gaza Strip through official (Hamas controlled) channels.

Recently, the Liberals also announced they were formally adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism as part of its anti-racism strategy. The explicit aim of those pushing the IHRA's definition of antisemitism is to silence or marginalize those who criticize Palestinian dispossession and support the Palestinian civil society led Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. The PM has repeatedly equated supporting Palestinian rights with hatred towards Jews and participated in an unprecedented smear against prominent Palestinian solidarity activist Dimitri Lascaris last summer.

Alongside efforts to demonize and delegitimize those advocating for a people under occupation, the Trudeau government has repeatedly justified violence against Palestinians. Last month Global Affairs Canada tweeted,

> "Canada condemns the barrage of rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel by Hamas and other terrorist groups, which have killed and injured civilians. This indiscriminate targeting of civilians is not acceptable. We call for an immediate end to this violence."
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> — Foreign Policy CAN (@CanadaFP) May 5, 2019

The statement was a response to an Israeli killed by rockets fired from Gaza and seven Palestinians killed in the open-air prison by the Israeli military. In the year before 200 Palestinians were killed and another 5,000 injured by live fire in peaceful March of Return

protests in Gaza. Not a single Israeli died during these protests.

The Trudeau government has repeatedly isolated Canada from world opinion on Palestinian rights. Canada has joined the US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Micronesia and Palau in opposing UN resolutions in favour of Palestinian rights that nearly every other country supported. In fact, the Trudeau Liberals may have the most anti-Palestinian voting record of any recent Canadian government. In August Liberal MP Anthony Housefather boasted in a *Canadian Jewish News* article:

> "We have voted against 87% of the resolutions singling out Israel for condemnation at the General Assembly versus 61% for the Harper government, 19% for the Martin and Mulroney governments and 3% for the Chrétien government. We have also supported 0% of these resolutions, compared to 23% support under Harper, 52% under Mulroney, 71% under Martin and 79% under Chretien."

Further legitimating its illegal occupation, the Liberals "modernized" Canada's two-decade-old Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Israel that allows West Bank settlement products to enter Canada duty-free. To promote an accord that recently received royal assent, International Trade Minister Jim Carr traveled to Israel and touted its benefits to Israel lobby organizations in Toronto and Winnipeg. "Minister Carr strengthens bilateral ties between Canada and Israel", explained a June 20 press release.

In mid-2017 the federal government said its FTA with Israel trumps Canada's Food and Drugs Act after the Canadian Food Inspection Agency called for accurate labelling of wines produced in the occupied West Bank. After David Kattenburg repeatedly complained about inaccurate labels on two wines sold in Ontario, the CFIA notified the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) that it "would not be acceptable and would be considered misleading" to declare Israel as the country of origin for wines produced in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Quoting from longstanding official Canadian policy, CFIA noted that "the government of Canada does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied in 1967." In response to pressure from the Israeli embassy, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and B'nai Brith, CFIA quickly reversed its decision.

> "We did not fully consider the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement," a terse CFIA statement explained. "These wines adhere to the Agreement and therefore we can confirm that the products in question can be sold as currently labelled."

Each year Canadian taxpayers subsidize hundreds of millions of dollars in charitable donations to Israel despite that country having a GDP per capita only slightly below Canada's. (How many Canadian charities funnel money to Sweden or Japan?) Millions of dollars are also channeled to projects supporting West Bank settlements, explicitly racist institutions and Israel's powerful military, which may all contravene Canadian charitable law. In response to a formal complaint submitted by four Palestine solidarity activists and Independent Jewish Voices Canada in fall 2017, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) began an audit of the Jewish National Fund for contravening Canadian charitable law. Despite the JNF openly supporting the Israeli military in explicit contravention of charitable law, the audit has been going on for a year and a half. The CRA is undoubtedly facing significant behind-

the-scenes pressure to let the JNF off with little more than a slap on the wrist. In 2013 Trudeau attended a JNF gala and other Liberal cabinet ministers have participated in more recent events put on by an explicitly racist organization Liberal MP Michael Leavitt used to oversee. (In a positive step, the Beth Oloth Charitable Organization, which had $60 million in revenue in 2017, had its charitable status revoked in January for supporting the Israeli military.)

Of course, the Trudeau government would deny its racism towards Palestinians. They will point to their "aid" given to the Palestinian Authority. But, in fact much of that money is used in an explicit bid to advance Israel's interests by building a security apparatus to protect the corrupt PA from popular disgust over its compliance in the face of ongoing Israeli settlement building. The Canadian military's Operation Proteus, which contributes to the Office of the United States Security Coordinator, trains Palestinian security forces to suppress "popular protest" against the PA, the "subcontractor of the Occupation".

In a recently published assessment of 80 donor reports from nine countries/institutions titled "Donor Perceptions of Palestine: Limits to Aid Effectiveness" Jeremy Wildeman concludes that Canada, the US and International Monetary Fund employed the most anti-Palestinian language.

> "Canada and the US," the academic writes, "were preoccupied with providing security for Israel from Palestinian violence, but not Palestinians from Israeli violence, effectively inverting the relationship of occupier and occupied."

At a recent meeting, BDS-Québec decided to launch a campaign targeting Justin Trudeau in the upcoming federal election campaign. The plan is to swamp his Papineau ridding with leaflets and posters highlighting the Prime Minister's anti-Palestinianism. It's time politicians pay a political price for their active support of Israel's racism.

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