

On International Human Rights Day, Canada Must Remember the Palestinians

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

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CJPME

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In observance of International Human Rights Day, celebrated annually on December 10th, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is calling on the Canadian government to defend the human rights of the Palestinian people. CJPME points out that the human rights violations committed against the Palestinians by the Israeli government are particularly long-standing, deeply entrenched, and well-documented, and deserve immediate international attention. Unfortunately, despite the urgency required to address Israel's abuses, CJPME notes that Canada has repeatedly chosen to ignore them.

To emphasize its message, CJPME is participating today in a press conference in Ottawa organized in conjunction with other Canadian human rights organizations. The event will take place at 11:00 a.m., in the West Block media studio (Room 125-B), on Parliament Hill.

"Unfortunately, the Trudeau government is almost indistinguishable from the Harper government in terms of its indifference toward Palestinian human rights," asserts Thomas Woodley, President of CJPME. CJPME points out that while the Trudeau government makes frequent reference to the "international rules-based order" while remarking on human rights violations in other parts of the world, it virtually never condemns Israel's ongoing violations. Worse, Canada frequently provides diplomatic cover for Israeli abuses by attempting to block criticism of Israel in international forums. "This is hypocrisy, plain and simple," adds Woodley.

International recognition of the severity of Israel's ongoing oppression of Palestinians reached new levels this year, when [Amnesty International](#)^[i] joined other prominent human rights organizations – including [Human Rights Watch](#)^[ii] and Israel-based [B'Tselem](#)^[iii] – in concluding that Israel is practicing apartheid against Palestinians. As highlighted in Amnesty's landmark report, the Palestinian people have been subject to systemic oppression and domination by Israel since 1948 and throughout the subsequent decades. This oppression has included land expropriation, political arrests, discriminatory laws, unfair

trial practices, restrictions on freedom of movement and civil liberties, and lethal violence against civilians, among other abuses. CJPME notes that apartheid is a crime under international law and that such grave allegations deserve to be investigated by the relevant international authorities.

CJPME's criticism of the Trudeau government aligns with [numerous public opinion polls](#) which demonstrate clearly that Canadians want their government to support Palestinian human rights, including in international forums. CJPME continues to urge the Canadian government to adopt a [series of measures](#) that would show meaningful support for Palestinians while playing a constructive role in the region. For example, Canada should:

- Engage with the growing consensus among human rights organizations that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid, as defined under international law;
- Stand up for human rights defenders and oppose Israel's criminalization of Palestinian NGOs;
- Suspend all military trade with Israel;
- Provide support for investigations by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ) into war crimes and other alleged violations;
- Support the re-establishment of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid;
- Push for an end to the blockade of Gaza and increase its funding for Palestinian refugees via UNRWA.

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Notes

[i] "Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians," Amnesty International, February 1, 2022, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>

[ii] "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and persecution," Human Rights Watch, April 27, 2021, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

[iii] "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid," B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), January 12, 2021, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid

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