

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly Must Sanction Israeli Officials for Illegal Settlement Expansion and Annexation

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) has sent a letter to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly urging the imposition of sanctions against Israeli officials in response to their attempted annexation of the occupied West Bank. In recent weeks, Israel has intensified its illegal colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT), dramatically expanding illegal settlements and moving to restructure its governance over the West Bank in a way that experts say amounts to de jure annexation. CJPME argues that these Israeli actions have crossed a red line, and urges Canada to impose sanctions on the Israeli officials who are responsible, including Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Minister Smotrich.

[Click here to download the full letter as a PDF.](#)

"Israel's actions in the occupied West Bank amount to annexation, one of the gravest violations of international law," said Michael Bueckert, Vice President of CJPME. "Canada must assert that a red line has been crossed and act accordingly to hold Israeli authorities for these crimes," added Bueckert. CJPME notes that Canada can model its response on its [existing sanctions](#) on individuals and entities related to Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of parts of Ukraine, and encourages Canada to impose similar restrictions on those involved in Israel's occupation and attempted annexation of Palestinian territory.

CJPME's letter warns that Israel's far right-government has made a significant change to its governance structure over the occupied West Bank, transferring sweeping powers out of military control and into civilian hands. This move is widely understood to amount to the *de jure* annexation of the territory, according to experts including prominent Israeli human rights lawyer Michael Sfard, Palestinian NGO Al-Haq, Israeli human rights NGOs, the editorial board of Haaretz, and more. Additionally, CJPME's letter notes that within the past month,

Israel has advanced more than [15 new illegal settlements](#) and more than [7,000](#) illegal settlement units in the OPT, and is preparing to approve major new settlements, including the so-called “doomsday” [E-1 project](#) which would connect Jerusalem with the Ma’ale Adumim settlement and sever the West Bank in half.

In response to Israeli actions in the occupied West Bank, CJPME is urging Canada to:

1. Condemn Israel’s recent change of governance in the West Bank as an act of *de jure* annexation;
2. Prohibit trade and all dealings with businesses and entities related to Israeli settlements and annexation in the OPT, including a ban on the import of goods from settlements and an asset freeze on individuals involved in settlement activity and acts of annexation;
3. Support the International Criminal Court (ICC) in its investigation of alleged war crimes in the OPT, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its inquiry into the legal consequences of Israel’s prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the OPT.

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