



CMPAC's Political Advocacy Strategy for Palestine

Introduction

As the situation in Palestine continues to deteriorate, the Canadian government is failing to meet the minimum level of intervention expected by Canadians, especially Muslims, who support justice and peace. As a community, it is essential that we clearly outline our objectives, demands, and expectations, without losing sight of our goals nor being distracted by superficial statements and cosmetic actions.

Overview of the Political Strategy

Our top level demand is that Canada leverage its domestic and foreign policy tools to end all acts of aggressions against the Palestinian people, hold accountable all parties directly or indirectly complicit in this genocide, and alleviate the deteriorating humanitarian conditions and suffering of Palestinians. On the domestic front, the government must meaningfully address the impact of the war on limiting freedom of expression of Canadian Muslims, Arabs, and pro-Palestinian voices and the rise in anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia, systemic or first-hand.

Complicity of the Canadian Government

We hold the Canadian government complicit in the genocide underway in Gaza, evidenced by a number of actions:

1. The Canadian government continued to approve permits for arms exports to Israel up until January 9, 2024.
2. Canada's UN votes, with the exception of one motion, provided political cover for the genocide.
3. The Canadian government's talking points echoed and amplified those of the Israeli government, attempting to justify the ongoing genocide.
4. The suspension of the UNRWA funding assisted in the damage inflicted on the primary UN agency distributing aid on the ground, thereby adding to the starvation and looming famine.
5. The Canadian government allowed dual citizen reservists to join the genocide operations in Gaza (some reports claim they were transported to Israel via Canadian military planes).

Thus, our primary advocacy effort is aimed at ending this complicity and holding decisionmakers accountable for the suffering they inflicted on the people of Gaza.

Proactive Role of the Canadian Government

1. Honouring Multilateral Commitments

Another objective for our advocacy is to drive the Canadian government to play a proactive role to improve the conditions of the Palestinian people. The weight of Canadian intervention internationally and its limitations cannot be overlooked. Canada's foreign policy stems from a position of respect to international humanitarian law and the different multilateral organizations to which it belongs. Canada is a signatory to the Genocide Convention and as such, it has an obligation to prevent and punish genocide perpetrators. It also has an obligation to support the implementation of the ICJ measures and the most recent UN resolution. All the above commitments necessitate that the Canadian government take clear action to enforce the above measures and to uphold international law, such as imposing sanctions on the Israeli government and on Israeli officials who are involved in the current genocide. Canada needs to make public official statements condemning Israeli aggressions and demanding an end to the war crimes. Solely commenting on the humanitarian crisis without direct accountability does not suffice.

2. Leveraging the Bilateral Relationship

The Canadian government can also leverage its bilateral relationship with Israel in a direction that demands respect of international law and an end to this crisis. Canada has strong diplomatic ties, trade relations, and security collaborations with Israel. If political will exists, stemming from respect for international humanitarian law and genuine interest to be part of the solution, the Canadian government can threaten to sever diplomatic relations, have a comprehensive embargo on military trade (not just a pause on new permits), suspend the free trade agreement, and end the security collaboration that, probably is in part, providing support to the Israeli military operations. This will signal to the Israeli government that its illegitimate invasion of Gaza has a political cost: the potential loss of its closest allies. It also invites other nations to follow suit and intensifies the political pressure on the Israeli government to end its aggression and collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

3. Declaring Palestinian Statehood

The Canadian government, partially in line with its foreign policy that recognizes Palestinian rights to a state, can unilaterally officially recognize Palestinian statehood. This will also intensify the pressure on Israel and will expedite the negotiations towards a two-state solution, securing respect for Palestinian rights.

The Impact on Canadians' Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian government has an obligation to protect freedom of expression and the right to peacefully assemble, without infringing upon them in public settings and in educational

institutions. The government should protect Canadians' rights to express pro-Palestinian sentiments without fear of discrimination in governmental or work spaces. Furthermore, the government should not discriminate against Canadian Palestinians in the immigration programs that attempt to save and bring their extended families from Gaza. They should not be treated any less than Ukrainians and other nationalities for whom Canada has instantly facilitated the immigration process.

Government Must Take Ownership and Meaningful Action

The Canadian government is at fault through its failure to take meaningful action and Canadian Muslims are deeply affected. The community reacted through massive grassroots mobilization on the streets and on campuses and have banned their politicians from accessing their centres in Ramadan. The only way for the Liberal government to have an opportunity for a dialogue with the community is by admitting fault, taking decisive action such as the ones presented above (as opposed to superficial ones), and most importantly to show respect for a community that has shown overwhelming support over multiple elections, contributing to bringing them and keeping them in power. Lastly, the government should make additional efforts to understand and engage with the wider community and not rely solely on limited friendly voices.

As a community who is directly impacted, we will never forget, and we will continue to advocate for our brothers and sisters in Palestine during this crisis and beyond, until they regain their full rights and land.

References

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