



3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M8X 2Y4 Canada

416-231-5931 1-800-268-3781
F: 416-231-3103
www.united-church.ca

May 10, 2022

The Honourable Minister Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca
Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca

RE: Canada must condemn Israeli Supreme Court decision upholding the forced expulsions of Palestinian villagers from Masafer Yatta and urge Israel to comply with International Law

Dear Minister Joly:

Greetings to you from The United Church of Canada.

I write to you today calling on you to take urgent action to protect Palestinian human rights. We are concerned that we have received no response from your office on the numerous concerns we have written regarding violations of Palestinian human rights. On 5 May 2022, the Israeli Supreme dismissed the petitions of the residents of eight Palestinian villages in the Masafer Yatta area of the southern West Bank against their forced expulsion from their homes and grazing lands claimed by the Israeli army as a firing zone. Canada must call on the Government of Israel to immediately rescind this decision. We request an urgent meeting with you to discuss this issue.

The Fourth Geneva Convention—to which both Israel and Canada are signatories—clearly prohibits an occupying power from forcible transfer of local populations under its occupation. This latest attempt to expel Palestinians from their land and homes by the Israeli military [has been denounced by the European Union](#) and [the Biden Administration](#). “The EU condemns such possible plans and urges Israel to cease demolitions and evictions,” said Peter Stano, the chief spokesperson for the EU diplomatic service, pointing out that “the establishment of a firing zone cannot be considered an “imperative military reason” to transfer the population under occupation, and urging Israel to respect its international obligations.” This makes Canada’s continued silence on Israel’s repeated violations of international law highly disturbing, even as Prime Minister Trudeau rightly condemns the Russian Government for its human rights violations in Ukraine, including during his recent visit to Ukraine.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), an Israeli human rights organization, [has condemned the Israeli Supreme Court decision](#), stating that “Israel has always exploited a loophole: the right of the Occupying Power to take temporary possession of private land if it is “required for essential and urgent military needs.” Human rights groups report that the Israeli government uses this tactic to hand over Palestinian land to Israeli settlers. Following the May 5th court decision, Israel subsequently announced [the construction of 4,000 additional illegal settlement homes](#) to be built in occupied Palestinian territory. Canada’s silence on this issue calls into question its commitment to the rule of law.

1/...



The United Church of Canada calls on Canada to:

- publicly denounce the Government of Israel's plan to forcibly expel the villagers of Masafer Yatta from their homes and land, and demand that the Government of Israel immediately rescind this decision;
- request the Representation of the Canada to the Palestinian Authority to visit the Palestinian communities of Masafer Yatta to express Canada's support for their right to remain in their homes on their land; and
- work with like-minded countries in the international community to use all available means to hold the Government of Israel accountable for violations of international law.

We would look forward to hearing from you regarding a meeting on this issue.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu
Executive Minister, Church in Mission Unit
The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

C.c.:
The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister
Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Conservative Party of Canada

The Hon. Candice Bergen, Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, Candice.Bergen@parl.gc.ca

New Democratic Party of Canada

Jagmeet Singh, Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca

Bloc Québécois

Yves-Francois Blanchet, Yves-Francois.Blanchet@parl.gc.ca

The Hon Michael Chong, Conservative Party of Canada, Michael.Chong@parl.gc.ca

Heather McPherson, New Democratic Party, Heather.McPherson@parl.gc.ca

Sai Rajagopal, Green Party of Canada, sai.rajagopal@greenparty.ca

Stéphane Bergeron, Bloc Québécois, Stephane.Bergeron@parl.gc.ca

Rob Oliphant, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Rob.Oliphant@parl.gc.ca

Robin Wettlaufer, Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority
Robin.Wettlaufer@international.gc.ca