



July 23, 2024

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

[Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca](mailto:Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca)

[Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca)

**RE: Canada should not only take note but also comply with States' obligations regarding the legal consequences of International Court of Justice's July 19 2024 Advisory Opinion on Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territory**

Dear Minister Joly,

Greetings from The United Church of Canada.

This letter follows on several we have written to you, both denominationally and jointly with others, urging Canada to comply fully and decisively with its obligations under international law with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory.

In its Advisory Opinion delivered on July 19 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled inter alia that: the State of Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is unlawful; that the State of Israel is under obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the OPT as rapidly as possible; the State of Israel is under obligation to cease immediately all new settlements activities and evacuate all settlers from the OPT; and that the State of Israel has an obligation to make reparations for the damage caused to all natural or legal persons concerned in the OPT. The ICJ also concluded that Israel's legislation and measures are discriminatory against Palestinians, and are in breach of Israel's obligations under article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

All states, including Canada, must cooperate with the United Nations to put into effect the modalities to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. An immediate end to the occupation is fundamental to Palestinians exercising that right. Canada is also under obligation "not to recognize any changes in the physical character or demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the territory occupied by Israel on 5 June 1967 including East Jerusalem, except as agreed by the parties to the conflict through negotiations." Canada is obligated to distinguish in its dealings with Israel between the State of Israel and the territories illegally occupied by Israel. Furthermore, Canada is obligated not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the occupied Palestinian territory.


The United Church reiterates the appeals from Palestinian and Israeli partners who have repeatedly pointed out that the international community, including Canada, must take every economic, political, and diplomatic measure available to pressure Israel to abide by international law and end its occupation of Palestinian territory. Failure to do so will only lead to further despair, even more violence, and deeper hatred and enmity. Violence and human rights violations continue unchecked in besieged Gaza, and in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank in the shadow of the genocide unfolding in Gaza.

We call on Canada to:

- express its explicit support for the July 19 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice;
- take every meaningful action in its relations with Israel, and through the United Nations and related bodies, to pressure Israel to immediately cease all settlement activity and withdraw all settlers from occupied Palestinian territory;
- pressure Israel to immediately halt its military assault in Gaza;
- impose a binding, full and immediate arms embargo on Israel, including via trade through third parties;
- continue to press for an immediate and lasting ceasefire by all parties, and the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all captives held by all parties.

As requested before, I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss how the church can work with the government in support of a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel.

Sincerely,



Rev. Michael Blair  
General Secretary  
The United Church of Canada  
[mblair@united-church.ca](mailto:mblair@united-church.ca)

cc.:

The Hon. Michael Chong, Conservative Party Critic, [Michael.Chong@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Michael.Chong@parl.gc.ca)  
Heather McPherson, New Democratic Party Critic, [Heather.McPherson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Heather.McPherson@parl.gc.ca)  
Stéphane Bergeron, Bloc Québécois Critic, [Stephane.Bergeron@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Stephane.Bergeron@parl.gc.ca)  
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party Critic, [Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca)