



Canadian policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Support for Israel and its security

Support for Israel, especially its right to live in peace with its neighbours within secure boundaries, has been at the core of Canada's Middle East policy since 1948.

Canada recognizes Israel's right to assure its own security, and to take proportionate measures in accordance with international law, including human rights and international humanitarian law, to protect the security of its citizens from attacks by terrorist groups.

Palestinian statehood

The international community has recognized the Palestinian right of self-determination, which should be implemented through negotiations. Canada supports the creation of a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestinian state, as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace settlement.

Support for a comprehensive peace settlement

Canada is committed to the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and the creation of a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

The 1993 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization Declaration of Principles continues to provide the basis for a comprehensive agreement based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Canada welcomed the decision of the Palestine National Council to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242 as a basis for peace negotiations as well as mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO in 1993.

Canada strongly supports the Quartet's Road Map, which sets out the obligations of both parties and steps for establishment of a Palestinian state. Canada supports other recent efforts by Israelis and Palestinians to work toward peace, for example at Sharm el-Sheikh in 1999 and Taba in 2000, and encourages regional and civil-society initiatives to end the conflict.



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Canada supports the Declaration of Principles, along with the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty, and the 1994 Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty, as endorsed by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1515 of November 2003.

Canada has continuously shared in practical contributions by the international community such as participation in peacekeeping forces, and the delivery of development assistance programs in the region.

Status of Jerusalem

Canada considers the status of Jerusalem can be resolved only as part of a general settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Canada opposes Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem.

Palestinian refugees

A just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue is central to the Middle East Peace Process and indispensable to a peace settlement, as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. Such a solution must be negotiated among the parties concerned in the context of a final status peace agreement. This solution should respect the rights of the refugees, in accordance with international law.

Canada voted in favour of UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, which stipulates "...that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practical date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property that, under the principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible." This resolution has been reaffirmed every year.

Canada continues to support Resolution 194, and believes that its provisions must be exercised in the context of an eventual peace agreement among the parties and in light of developments since 1948, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, bilateral negotiations and the Oslo Accords.

Canada has played a prominent role in the search for a viable and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, primarily as Gavel Holder of the multilateral Refugee Working Group. Although the Refugee Working Group has been formally in abeyance since 1996, Canada has continued to focus international attention on the situation of the more than four million Palestinian refugees, and to promote preparations for the eventual resumption of negotiations.



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Occupied territories

Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over territories occupied in 1967 (the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip).

Canada opposes all unilateral actions that might prejudge the outcome of negotiations, including the establishment of settlements in the territories, unilateral moves to annex East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and construction of the barrier inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories and establishes Israel's obligations as an occupying power, in particular with respect to the humane treatment of the inhabitants of the occupied territories.

UN Security Council Resolutions 446 and 465 refer to Israeli settlements in occupied territories as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The settlements also constitute a serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

In addition to its obligations under international humanitarian law, Israel has obligations under human rights law with respect to the inhabitants of the occupied territories.

Terrorism

Canada condemns all acts of terrorism, wherever they may occur. Terrorists should be brought to justice and prosecuted in accordance with international law. Terrorism must be rejected as a means for achieving political ends. It is counter-productive to reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace settlement.

Canada has listed Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, and other groups as terrorist organizations in accordance with UN Resolution 1373 (2001) and Canadian legislation.

The Palestine Liberation Organization

Canada recognizes the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the principal representative of the Palestinian people. Canada also recognizes the Palestinian Authority (PA) as the governmental entity of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza.



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Palestinian reform

Canada supports Palestinian elections and the reform of Palestinian governance.

Canada supports international efforts to assist the Palestinians in the development of transparent and accountable governance institutions and structures to ensure respect for human rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law

Israel and the Palestinian Authority must comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Canada believes strongly that respect by the parties for human rights and international humanitarian law is key to ensuring the protection of civilians, and can contribute to the creation of a climate conducive to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement.

The barrier

Canada recognizes Israel's right to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks, including through the restriction of access to its territory, and to build a barrier on its own territory for security purposes. Canada has consistently maintained that Israel's construction of the barrier inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem is contrary to international law. Canada opposes Israel's construction of a barrier extending into the occupied territories, as well as expropriations and the demolition of houses and economic infrastructure carried out for this purpose.

United Nations resolutions on the Middle East

The United Nations has played an important role in efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Canada assesses UN resolutions in the light of their merits and consistency with our principles. Canada advocates a fair-minded approach and rejects one-sided resolutions in international forums. Successive Canadian governments have been concerned about the polemical nature of many of the Middle East resolutions.