

**POSITION**      **ISRAELI VIOLENCE**  
**PAPER:**        **IN GAZA**



## **Core CJPME Values**

1. All death is tragic. CJPME mourns the death of all individuals – civilian and militant – killed in the violence in Palestine and Israel.
2. International humanitarian law must be respected by all. In war, all parties presume themselves to hold the moral high ground. International humanitarian law makes no judgement on which side is right or wrong. Rather, it simply sets limits to the brutality and civilian death and destruction tolerated in war.

## **Policy Recommendations for Canada**

1. Canada must provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians. On July 18, given the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the UN and select NGOs revised their appeal for humanitarian assistance from \$215 million, to \$384 million. The aid will help the neediest, particularly children, and does not replace the services normally provided by the Palestinian Authority (PA.) Canada must contribute generously.
2. Canada should call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law. Targeting of civilians by any militant party is strictly forbidden under international law. Israeli air strikes and artillery shelling of Palestinian homes and civilian areas must stop, as should the launching of rockets against Israeli border towns by Palestinian armed groups.
3. Canada should call for an immediate stop to all Israeli collective punishment imposed on Palestinians. Canada must condemn recent acts of Israeli collective punishment, which have included the kidnapping of dozens of Palestinian legislators, attacks on electricity and water supplies, border closures, and attacks on transportation infrastructure, among others.
4. Canada must support UN Security Council and Human Rights Council resolutions on Israeli violence in Gaza. The US vetoed the July 12 Security Council resolution, while Canada voted against the July 6 Human Rights Council resolution. Both called for a cessation of violence against civilians, and treatment of detained combatants and non-combatants in conformity with the Geneva Conventions.
5. Canada must act on the recommendations of the UN fact-finding mission. The UN Human Rights Council sent its Special Rapporteur in mid-July to Israel/Palestine to report on violations of international law. Canada must act on the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur when his report is issued.

## **Key Points: Dynamics of Israel's recent violence in Gaza**

1. Israel's use of force is highly disproportionate. In the month since Israel launched military operations in Gaza on June 28, over 130 Palestinians have been killed, including over 30 children. On July 25, Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs described Israel's actions as "clearly a disproportionate use of force." From June 28 through July 18, Israel had fired over 1,000 artillery shells into Gaza, and carried out 168 aerial bombings in Gaza.
2. Israel is unquestionably meting out collective punishment. Collective punishment is described as punishment of a group of people for the crime of a few. On the eve of Israel's military action in Gaza, Prime Minister Olmert admitted that Israel sought to "*apply pressure* so that the captured soldier will be freed. We want to create a new equation – freeing the captured soldier in return for lessening *the pressure on the Palestinians.*" (Emphasis added.) Among many others, Physicians for

Human Rights–Israel issued a statement on July 3 against Israeli collective punishment in Gaza, as per Section 50 of the Hague Convention.

3. Respect for international law is not conditional. Under international law (e.g. the Fourth Geneva Convention), there is no justification for the reckless killing of civilians, collective punishment, or the destruction of civilian infrastructure. This applies regardless of questions of “who started it,” or “who’s wrong,” and similar accusations being advanced by the Israelis.
4. By bullying Palestinians under the Hamas government, and kidnapping its legislators, Israel practices “state terrorism.” Terrorism has been defined as the deliberate killing of civilians and the destruction of property to further political ends. Had Palestinian militants abducted and detained members of Israel’s cabinet, it would have been labelled a “terrorist strike.” The kidnapping of Hamas legislators, combined with attacks on civilian targets (e.g. apartment buildings, power grids, bridges, government buildings) reflects Israel’s intent to destroy Palestinian democracy, and to make Palestine ungovernable.

### **Key Points: Paradoxes of Israel’s Recent Aggression in Gaza**

1. Israel, not Palestine, was the party that escalated the violence in Gaza. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Israeli army entered Gaza and kidnapped a doctor and his brother: such acts are so commonplace they barely make international news. Israel currently holds over 9000 Palestinian prisoners, many of them detained for long periods, many never charged. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli military post – one associated with the shelling into Gaza – and captured an Israeli soldier. Israel’s massive attack against the civilian population of Gaza which followed was the escalation in the conflict.
2. Israel is not acting in “self defence.” Israel currently controls the Gazan airspace, borders, ports, and the radio waves – still understood as “occupation” under international law. It has shelled and bombed targets in Gaza and conducted military operations in Gaza at will through the spring and summer of 2006. In the month since June 28<sup>th</sup>, over 130 Palestinians are dead, and over 300 injured; while in Israel, one soldier is dead and 12 civilians have been injured.
3. Israel holds 9000 times as many prisoners as its Palestinian adversaries. As mentioned above, Israel currently holds over 9000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, among them about 400 children, and about 100 women. Whereas Palestinians captured a “combatant” – an Israeli soldier – under international law, most of the Israel’s prisoners are non-combatant political prisoners.

### **For more Information...**

For more information and background on the violence in Palestine/Israel, Canada’s foreign policy posture with respect to Palestine, Hamas and Israel, and the other topics discussed above, please call CJPME at 514/745-8491.