

**POSITION PAPER: DANGERS OF CANADA-ISRAEL
“PUBLIC SAFETY”
COOPERATION**



Policy Recommendations for Canada

On March 23, 2008, Canada signed a “Declaration of Intent” with Israel to cooperate on public safety. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) feels that this agreement was unwise and ill-conceived, as it undermines Canadian values of equality and basic freedoms. CJPME believes that Canadians should question both 1) the reasons for Canada’s involvement in such an agreement, and 2) the essence of the envisaged public safety cooperation. CJPME believes that this agreement must be annulled.

- A. Canada must define *in advance* the criteria by which it would choose a partner in public safety. Before launching into agreements so central to a nation’s values, Canada should define the qualities sought in a partner in public safety. In defining these criteria, surely such factors such as 1) the verified respect for universal equality; 2) the verified respect for human and humanitarian rights; 3) the presence of shared borders; and other considerations should come into play.
- B. Canada must assess *in advance* the root causes of its public safety threats. While public safety is an important national concern, ensuring it should be based on a profound understanding of the threats to it. The Declaration speaks flippantly of “shared threats” faced by Canada and Israel without any justification. Ill-chosen partners in public safety may actually increase the threats to our Canadian national security.
- C. Canada must protect itself from influences which may undermine its commitment to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When the Declaration speaks of, e.g. the sharing of training, education and exercises with Israel, it suggests that Canada may exchange techniques with Israeli organizations which are repeatedly condemned – both internally and internationally – for human and humanitarian rights abuses. Canada should categorically dissociate itself from such partnerships.
- D. Canada must protect its citizenry which may be targeted in bad faith. With information sharing and cooperation in border management, and immigration, it is easy to foresee how citizens and immigrants to Canada who oppose Israeli human rights abuses could be inappropriately targeted through such sharing.

A: Canada must decide how best to choose a public safety partner

1. Canada must limit its public safety partners to only those who espouse universal equality. Israel defines itself as a “Jewish and democratic state” and the preferential treatment of its Jewish citizens permeates Israeli society, including law enforcement, immigration, prisons and correctional services. Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms asserts the equality of every individual under Canadian law. Without the shared value of universal equality, Canada has no partner in Israel.
2. Canada must limit its public safety partners to only those who uphold human and humanitarian rights. Israel is repeatedly pilloried for its human rights and humanitarian rights abuses, not only by international human rights organizations, but by Israeli human rights organizations. Whether it be discriminatory laws, or assassinations, or the use of torture, or the abuse of administrative detention, or other violations, Israel does not share Canada’s commitment to human and humanitarian rights.
3. Canada must be careful not to legitimize or reward unlawful behaviour on the part of other states. If Israel has expertise – e.g. technology, surveillance or policing techniques – in “public safety,” it’s expertise which has been developed through a 40-year military occupation of Palestine, the oppression of the occupied Palestinian population, and ongoing rights abuses against Arabs in Israel proper. Canada should not reward Israeli know-how honed in this way.
4. Canada must seek international “models” in public safety partnerships. Canada should look to form public safety partnerships with nations which protect themselves without compromising human rights and civil liberties. Canada must avoid Israel’s vicious circle of sacrificing civil liberties for security.

B: Canada must more carefully assess its threats

1. Canada must assess the sources of hostility towards Canada. Terrorism is a tactic used by various groups, not a single unified adversary. The organizations that threaten Israel do not threaten Canada. The organizations that threaten Israel do so for specific reasons relating to Israel's military occupation of Palestine and other lands of its neighbours. Canada must perform an independent assessment of the sources of ill-will towards it, and address these true sources.
2. Canada must ensure that steps taken in the name of "public safety" do not actually exacerbate ill-will toward Canada. Much global ill-will toward the West is due to the West's support of Israel's regime of occupation in Palestine. Canada's public safety agreement with Israel may actually create or deepen the threats faced by Canada by enflaming hostility toward Canada's for its ongoing unquestioned support of Israel.

C: Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms should not be undermined

1. Canada must uphold the principles of its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees a number of key legal rights: 1) the right to life, liberty and security of the person; 2) the right from unreasonable search and seizure; 3) freedom from arbitrary detention or imprisonment; 4) the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual punishment; etc. CJPME's factsheets document dozens of different ways in which Israeli practices do not uphold these key rights.

Given that the new Canada-Israel agreement targets the sharing of "knowledge, experience, expertise,.. and best practices" as well as "technical... cooperation, including education, training, and exercises," there is reason to believe that illicit Israeli practices could bleed into Canada's public safety agencies.

D: Canada must protect its citizenry

1. Canada should never share "information" with Israel. While the terms of the Declaration are vague – e.g. "sharing... information;" cooperating on illegal immigration; cooperating on law enforcement – they are certainly broad enough permit sharing of all sorts of information which could put vulnerable Canadian citizens at risk. Israel maintains files on likely hundreds of thousands of individuals of Palestinian origin. Given Israel's law enforcement and interrogation practices, such information should not be deemed acceptable or credible for Canadian public safety. Similarly, information that Canada collects concerning its citizens should not be passed to Israel.
2. Canada should consider any Israeli intelligence suspect. There are many reasons why Canada should view any Israeli intelligence as suspect. First, Israeli human rights organizations continue to document widespread Israeli use of torture. Canada may never know how whether testimony or charges communicated from Israel were obtained from torture. Second, Israel may have its own reasons for trumping up charges or testimony against individuals opposed to illegal Israeli practices. Canada must protect against this. Finally, under current Israeli policy, large segments of "security forces" work to perpetuate the occupation of Palestine. Intelligence gained through the imposition of an occupation is bound to fall out of context when Palestinian or other Middle Easterners emigrate to Canada.

For more Information...

For more information and background on Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East, the Canada-Israel Declaration of Intent on Public Safety cooperation, and related topics, please consult the CJPME Website at <http://www.cjpme.ca> or contact CJPME at (514) 745-8491.