



Canadian Friends
Service Committee
(QUAKERS)
www.quakerservice.ca

January 22, 2018

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

I write on behalf of Canadian Friends Service Committee, the peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada. We were pleased to learn that Canada's embassy in Israel will not be moved from Tel Aviv. However, we are deeply concerned that a move by the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has provoked increased violence and tensions in an already explosive situation.

Quakers nationally hold a deep concern for the well-being of all Israelis and all Palestinians. We are aware of the violence done on both sides, as well as the massive inequality of power. We are concerned for our partners and colleagues, some of whom are based in East Jerusalem. Legal scholars, including most recently United Nations special rapporteur Michael Lynk, have argued convincingly that Israel is an illegal occupant of Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem. Professor Lynk makes note of the on-going Israeli settlement activity and Palestinian home demolitions in East Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank.¹ It is our view that matters are getting worse for the residents of Jerusalem, particularly Palestinian residents, and that much more needs to be done to support them.

We recognize that the question of access to Jerusalem is deeply complex, as Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Baha'i all feel special connections to the city and to particular holy sites. This significance to multiple religions, and to the Jewish Israeli and Palestinian peoples, must be recognized and honoured. Canada's longstanding policy that the question of Jerusalem must be determined in negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians remains sound, but in our view this is becoming increasingly improbable. We urge Canada to take actions that will safeguard the possibility of such negotiations. We call on Canada to play a proactive role in this conflict, in particular through active support for international law and condemnation of any and all violations of international law, whether committed by Israel, the United States, the Palestinian Authority, or Hamas. The delicacy of this situation cannot excuse Canada from taking principled action to support the well-being and dignity of all.

In Friendship,

Derek Nice,
Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee

CC: Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Erin O'Toole, Foreign Affairs Critic, Conservative Party,
Hélène Laverdière, Opposition Critic for Foreign Affairs, New Democratic Party
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party

¹ Lynk, Michael. "Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*." *United Nations General Assembly, 72nd Session, Agenda Item 72(c)*, October 23, 2017, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/340/02/PDF/N1734002.pdf>



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