



Oct 31, 2022

Dear Minister Joly,

Canadian Friends Service Committee is the peace and social justice agency of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada.

In 2017 we endorsed the No Way to Treat a Child Campaign. At the time we stated: "Every child should be free from cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment. Just about everyone can agree on this. In practice, one of Canada's closest allies is cruelly and systematically mistreating children, and Canada is turning a blind eye... Canada's policy states a commitment to protection and promotion of the rights of children and youth around the world, particularly children living in conflict-affected areas. Israel's ill-treatment of Palestinian children must change at once."

However, it appears that nothing has changed. According to Defence for Children International-Palestine approximately 500-700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system each year.¹

Despite stating in its *Voices at Risk* guidelines that "Promoting respect for human rights is at the heart of Canada's international policies and engagement," Canada has remained disturbingly silent on this matter.

A recent distressing example has come to our attention. Shadi Khouri, a 16 year old student at Ramallah Friends School, a Quaker school, was beaten in his home by Israeli military forces, then dragged barefoot, blindfolded, bleeding, and alone, from his home, and placed in detention in the early morning of October 18.

It is time for Canada to speak up. We call on you to contact the Israeli Government and the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa, to demand the immediate release of Shadi Khoury, alongside all children unlawfully kidnapped, interrogated, and violently detained by Israeli occupation forces. We call on you also to appoint a Special Envoy to examine the ongoing situation of Palestinian children and to make recommendations for the Canadian government to act upon.

We continue to hold out hope for a just peace that will benefit all in Israel/Palestine. This must include respect for the basic dignity and human rights of all persons in the region, especially children who are particularly vulnerable. We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

In Friendship,

Vince Zelazny,
Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

¹ See Defense for Children International-Palestine, "Military Detention," https://www.dci-palestine.org/military_detention_stats