

Hon. Francois Philippe Champagne
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada
Global Affairs Canada

August 4, 2020

Honourable minister,

RE: Please ensure existing Canadian policy on occupied East Jerusalem is applied on the ground

Congratulations to Prime Minister Trudeau for speaking out against Israel's threat to "annex" large portions of the West Bank. Our actions, combined with those of many other "like minded" countries, seem to have pressured Israel to hold back on that annexation, at least for the moment.

At the same time, however, Israeli authorities have been increasingly aggressive in policing and controlling the activities of Palestinians living in Occupied East Jerusalem. In addition to the [recent announcement of proposed new destruction of Palestinian houses and construction of new Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem](#), Israel has been targeting and harassing Palestinian cultural institutions, including music schools, theatre, cinema and cafes in East Jerusalem.

Recent actions in East Jerusalem have included:

- [Police raids on Palestinian cultural institutions](#),
- [arrest and interrogation of leading Palestinian cultural figures](#),
- [closing of a Palestinian health centre](#) and
- [repeated arrests](#) of the legally appointed Palestinian governor of occupied East Jerusalem.

The reasons cited by Israeli authorities range from investigating "tax abuse" to "suspicion of terrorism", a term for which Israel has a very broad definition. Israel claims the right to undertake these actions because it says it has "annexed" East Jerusalem. They are part of an ongoing official Israeli policy called "Judaization" aimed at suppressing Palestinian culture in Jerusalem and replacing it with Jewish Israeli institutions and culture. It is not exaggerating to call this a form of "ethnic cleansing".

Minister, as you know, these Israeli interventions are illegal under international law, and also contrary to Canadian policy, as they all occur in Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Canadian policy, as stated clearly on the Global Affairs Canada website, is as follows:

"Canada considers the status of Jerusalem can be resolved only as part of a general settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Canada does not recognize Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem."

But our official policy appears to remain without any real application. I am not aware of any response from Canada to these recent Israeli interventions. In contrast, the representatives of many of Canada's European allies participated in a symbolic show of support for the Edward Said Conservatory last week. Canada was not reported as being represented.

I am urging you, as Minister of Foreign Affairs to protect Canada's reputation by ensuring APPLICATION of Canada's existing policy by:

1. Expressing directly to Israeli authorities in Ottawa and Tel Aviv that Canada continues to oppose the extension of Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territories.
2. Joining with "like minded" countries to take concrete steps to show opposition to Israel's ongoing campaign of "ethnic cleansing" of East Jerusalem.
3. Directing our representative in Ramallah to provide appropriate support and assistance to Palestinian cultural institutions in East Jerusalem.

I would appreciate a response to these suggestions as soon as possible. I will be happy to include your answer in a blog post I will be sending to subscribers of [Canada Talks Israel Palestine](#).

Thank you in advance.



Peter Larson, Ph.D.

Chair

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BCC: various members and friends of Ottawa Forum on Israel Palestine