

**TO:** Salma Zahid, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre and Chair of the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group

**RE:** Upcoming meeting scheduled for May 2, 2021 at 6:00PM

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Ms. Zahid,

In preparation for our upcoming meeting, the following serves as memorandum from the Canadian Palestinian Research Center (CPRC), to briefly outline specific instances of human right violations as it pertains to the Palestinian people. As Chair of the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group, we find it imperative that the Canadian government be made aware of these specific instances of human rights violations towards innocent civilian Palestinian populations. It is our hope that your committee will strongly consider investigating some of these issues.

Since 1967, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is under military occupation by the Israeli government. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has been under siege by the Israeli government. The occupation of Palestinian land over the years has resulted in land theft, serious human rights violations, and war crimes which, as you know, are currently being investigated by the International Criminal Court.

#### **Recent Forced Displacements and Evictions<sup>1</sup>**

According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (“OCHA”), Israel demolished 848 Palestinian residential structures and buildings in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem in 2020. As a result, 996 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes. For the remainder of the year, more Palestinians were faced with forced evictions and displacements. The OCHA estimated that in December 2020, 200 Palestinian households in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had pending. This places 800 adults and children at risk of forced displacement.

Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, is currently at risk of forced eviction by Israel. Specifically, 8 families, which totals 87 Palestinians, are at imminent risk of forced eviction. Enclosed to this memorandum is a letter written by 28 families of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem addressed to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda. It is worth mentioning that a number of Canadian organizations endorsed this letter, including the Canadian Arab Lawyers Association and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

#### **Unlawful Killings of Palestinian Children<sup>2</sup>**

In addition to ongoing forced displacement, Palestinian children are at risk of abuse and violence of Israeli forces. According to the OCHA, in 2020, Israeli forces killed at least 31 Palestinians, including 9 children, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. On February 15, 2020, Israeli forces shot and injured in the eye a nine-year-old called Malek Issa while he was returning home from school in the East Jerusalem

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<sup>1</sup>Source - Amnesty International:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

<sup>2</sup>Source - Amnesty International:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

neighborhood of Issawiya. Moreover, in December of 2020, Israeli forces shot and killed a 15-year-old teenager, Ali Abu Alia, in the village of Al-Mughayyir, in the West Bank<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Imprisonment of Palestinian Children<sup>4</sup>**

The Israeli government is notorious for imposing its “administrative detentions” of Palestinians. According to the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories<sup>5</sup>, *B’Tselem*, “administrative detention is incarceration without trial or charge, alleging that a person plans to commit a future offense. It has no time limit, and the evidence on which it is based is not disclosed. Israel employs this measure extensively and routinely and has used it to hold thousands of Palestinians for lengthy periods of time. While detention orders are formally reviewed, this is merely a semblance of judicial oversight, as detainees cannot reasonably mount a defense against undisclosed allegations. Nevertheless, courts uphold the vast majority of orders.”

In 2020, Israeli authorities conducted hundreds of raids throughout the West Bank to arrest Palestinians. The raids are violent and intrusive in nature and usually take place late at night in people’s homes. In 2020, Israel held 157 Palestinian children in prison, two of which are in administrative detention. The children were interrogated without their parents present and placed with adults in the prison.

#### **Dr. Tarek Loubani: A Canadian Palestinian Shot in the Gaza Strip**

Dr. Tarek Loubani is a Canadian Palestinian emergency physician who regularly volunteers in the Gaza Strip and other conflict zones. He is a physician at the London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ontario and Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Tarek is an Associate Professor at Western University and founder of the Glia Project, which designs and manufactures high quality, low cost medical devices to reduce the disparity of care in poor locations.

On May 14, 2018, Dr. Loubani was shot in both legs by Israeli snipers in the Gaza Strip. He was treating injured Palestinians who were protesting against Israeli brutalities. On that day, 59 Palestinians were killed and hundreds were wounded<sup>6</sup>. On May 16, 2018, Prime Minister Trudeau issued a statement condemning the violence and calling for an independent investigation<sup>7</sup>. To date, no such investigation has been conducted or initiated by the Canadian government.

Yours Truly,

### **The Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations**



<sup>3</sup>**Source – AlJazeera:**

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/6/may-god-give-us-patience-palestinians-mourn-minor-killed>

<sup>4</sup>**Source – Amnesty International:**

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

<sup>5</sup>**Source – B’Tselem:** [https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative\\_detention](https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative_detention)

<sup>6</sup>**Source – CBC:**

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-tuesday-edition-1.4663685/canadian-shot-in-gaza-says-he-was-clearly-marked-as-a-doctor-1.4663689>

<sup>7</sup>**Source – Government of Canada:**

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2018/05/16/statement-prime-minister-violence-gaza-strip>

The Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations consists of eighteen Canadian Palestinian non-partisan and non-profit community-based organizations across Canada nationally united on protecting Palestinian human rights in Canada and abroad.



