



**Date:** June 15, 2021

**To the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau,**

The Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations (referred to as "Coalition") is disappointed to hear your [statement](#) on Friday June 11, 2021, indicating that the Liberal government categorically rejects the label of apartheid as it relates to Israel and Palestine. Not only is this statement damaging to advocacy of Palestinian human rights, but also fragrantly contradicts what Canada stands for as a leader in human rights. In making such a statement, your government blatantly disregards arguably one of the most prominent and leading research regarding the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution.

The Human Rights Watch ("HRW") published a comprehensive report on April 27, 2021, [A Threshold Crossed Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution](#). The findings and analysis in this report are alarming. In this report, HRW concludes that, over the years of occupation and control by Israel, the Israeli government has committed the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution. HRW substantiates its conclusion through evidence and legal analysis of the international law.

The Coalition wishes to reiterate that advocacy for Palestinian human rights is *not* antisemitic and conflating the two is not right. Canadian Palestinians from coast to coast have, since the release of the report, met with a number of members of parliament in order to discuss the findings of this report. Canadian Palestinians urged the government to adopt the findings of the report which, as stated above, is based on years of research and legal analyses. These discussions did not include the topics of religion nor did they target a specific community. These discussions were purely centered on the analysis adopted by the Human Rights Watch in rendering the conclusion that Israel has committed the crimes of apartheid and persecution. The Coalition reaffirms that all antisemitic sentiments are unequivocally unacceptable. However, Canada seems to resort to the argument of antisemitism as it relates to the advocacy of human rights of the Palestinian people. These issues are separate and apart and it is unjust to use the argument of antisemitism as a shield for the Canadian government to consider important legal findings.

The Coalition previously welcomed Canada's condemnation of Israel's settlement activities in its [statement](#) at the Human Rights Council that took place on May 27, 2021. Canada has always maintained a bilateral approach towards the Question of Palestine and Israel. For the past two years, Canada has voted in favour of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people at the United Nations General Assembly. Canada believes in a two-state solution; therefore, it is crucial for the Canadian government to recognize that the ongoing violations of human rights by the Israeli government makes this goal impossible.

The Canadian government repeatedly chooses to support the Israeli government in its crimes, despite academic and legal research. The Coalition profoundly denounces the unfounded, one sided and frankly unjust statement made at the House of Commons. We call upon the Canadian government to take a principled step and reconsider its position basing it on factual and legal evidence that focuses on the upholding of international human rights. Further, the Coalition urges the Government of Canada to put an end to the trade of Israeli settlements products, as these settlements present a clear impediment to achieving just and lasting peace in the region.

Yours Truly,

**The Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations**

