



Canada's Complicity in Israeli Apartheid

Canada is one of Israel's strongest military, economic and political allies and is therefore deeply complicit in Israel's ongoing discrimination and suppression of the Palestinian people. As settler-colonial states that have been built on the removal and erasure of indigenous peoples, they are committed to supporting one another. This relationship has deep historical roots – Canada's reserve system infamously served as a model for the bantustans in South Africa, which then inspired the Israel's apartheid system.

Despite Israel's increasing violations of Palestinian human rights, unlawful persecutions, denial of justice, confiscation and settlement of Palestinian land, and indiscriminate bombing of Gaza, it's therefore not surprising that the federal Liberal Government refuses to criticize Israel. On the contrary, the government increasingly supports Israel in myriad ways and is therefore complicit in Israeli apartheid.

"We have a government that continues to pursue a whole series of different measures to enable Israel's human rights violations of Palestinians."

Yves Engler,
Author, Researcher, Activist

In the past and present, there are a multitude of ways the Canadian government has been complicit in Israeli apartheid:

- In 1947, Lester Pearson, who later became the Prime Minister of Canada, was openly pro-Zionist and helped set the parameters of the Partition Plan, which dispossessed Palestinians from their land and violated their right to self-determination;
- Canada has refused to abide by the 2016 UN Security Council Resolution 2334, calling on member states to "distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied in 1967;
- Ottawa extends economic and trade assistance to Israel's illegal settlement enterprise;
- Contrary to the Canadian Revenue Agency's guidelines which prohibit supporting other countries' militaries, Canada is turning a blind eye to some charitable organizations funneling their donations to the Israeli Defense Forces (e.g., Canadian Zionist Cultural Association);
- Canada pulled out of the *World Conference Against Racism* because previous conferences equated Zionism with racism;
- Trudeau's government told the International Criminal Court of Justice not to investigate Israeli war crimes and threatened to end funding;
- The federal government is spending hundreds of thousands of tax-payer dollars on lawyers to prevent the proper labelling of wines coming from illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories thereby preventing Canadian consumers from knowing where the wines are coming from; and
- The Trudeau government is expanding the *Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement*, applying Israeli custom laws to products produced in illegal settlements in the West Bank thereby contravening international law.

In 2014, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership was signed, both countries pledging to “deepen the relationship and cooperation” in areas such as border defence, counterterrorism, public safety, and trade.

“We are opposed to any initiative within the United Nations and other multilateral forums, that is specifically aimed at criticizing Israel.”

Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Liberal Government of Canada

Although Canada renewed its UNRWA funding in 2020, committing to \$90 million dollars over three years, Canada voted “no” on the two UNRWA resolutions at the General Assembly in December 2021. First, Canada voted against the resolution that the effective functioning of UNRWA remains essential in all fields of operation; and secondly, they voted against the resolution affirming the necessity for the continuation of UNRWA’s work!

When Canada was recently competing for a seat on the United Nations Security Council, then Foreign Affairs Minister Christine Freeland said their government would act as an “asset for Israel” on the council.

The Canadian government enables the Israeli apartheid by providing support for the arms trade. In 2021, the total value of military arms and components sent from Canada to Israel exceeded \$26 million. This marked an increase of 33% from the year before. Israel uses sophisticated weaponry purchased from Canada in its settler-colonial and military operations against Palestinians, meaning our hands are bloodied both by government action and inaction.

FURTHER READING:

- *House of Mirrors: Justin Trudeau’s Foreign Policy* by Yves Engler
- *Stand on Guard for Whom? A People’s History of the Canadian Military* by Yves Engler
- *Canada Foreign Policy Institute website*
- *Canada and Israel: Partners in the “Settler Colonial Contract”*, Azeezah Kanji <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2021/05/21/canada-and-israel-partners-in-the-settler-colonial-contract/>
- *“A ‘Middle Power’ in Action: Canada and the Partition of Palestine”* by Hassan Hussein in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 30 (Summer 2008): 41-55 https://www.scienceopen.com/document_file/523f21ae-0af1-4942-902b-cfcccb56b74f/ScienceOpen/41858551.pdf