

25 June 2025

Senators' Statement on the Situation in Gaza and Call for the Government of Canada to Uphold International Law

We are concerned about the deepening humanitarian crisis in Palestine, the disregard for international law by the State of Israel, and the legal risk that Canada faces in failing to act in the face of crimes against humanity.

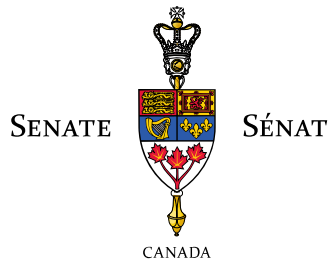
On 11 June 2025, a group of nine humanitarian organizations briefed senators on the plight of children in Ukraine and Gaza and pointed to the vast discrepancy in Canada's response to the two crises. They urged senators to do more to draw attention to atrocities in Palestine and to encourage the Canadian government to take stronger action in support of Palestinian children.

According to UNICEF, more than 50,000 Palestinian children have been killed or injured by Israeli forces since October 2023. A study by Oxfam concludes that more women and children have been killed in Gaza by the Israeli military over the past year than in an equivalent period of any other conflict over the last 20 years. Over 80 percent of Gaza's buildings have been destroyed. The humanitarian situation in Gaza today is beyond appalling.

Since the January 2024 International Court of Justice statement on the plausibility of the claim of genocide in Gaza, Israel's assault on the occupied territory has only become more vicious, and deadly. By any measure, Israel has not complied with the ICJ's order that Israel "take measures to prevent genocidal acts and incitement to genocide, and to ensure humanitarian aid reaches Gaza."

For that matter, Canada and many of its allies have so far failed in their responsibility to act in the face of gross violations of international humanitarian law through arms sales, economic relations, and diplomatic support for the State of Israel.

We applaud Canada's recent statements condemning Israel for the denial of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, the imposition of sanctions against two Israeli Ministers, and our vote in the UN on the protection of civilians. However, these actions are not enough to stop the ongoing siege of Gaza and the suffering of Palestinians.



Canada must do more. Respectfully, we call on the Government of Canada to immediately:

1. Protect and Fund Humanitarian Relief in Gaza, including UNRWA
2. Impose a two-way arms embargo on Israel
3. End Canadian involvement in illegal Israeli settlements
4. Address anti-Palestinian racism and protect freedom of expression on Palestine
5. Recognize the State of Palestine
6. Review the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, with a view to suspending or terminating the agreement on the grounds of gross violations of human rights and international law by Israel

These actions constitute a minimalist set of responses to a crisis that is not only existential for Palestinians, but which poses a grave challenge to international humanitarian law and its consistent application across different conflicts. For Canada, there is the added risk of reputational damage at a time when we are loudly trumpeting the importance of the international rules-based order and our commitment to uphold it. We cannot look away.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Amina Gerba
Senator for Québec

The Hon. Tracy Muggli
Senator for Saskatchewan

The Hon. Margo Greenwood
Senator for British Columbia

The Hon. Kim Pate
Senator for Ontario

The Hon. Katherine Hay
Senator for Ontario

The Hon. Paulette Senior
Senator for Ontario

The Hon. Mary Jane McCallum
Senator for Manitoba

The Hon. Yuen Pau Woo
Senator for British Columbia

The Hon. Marilou McPhedran
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The Hon. Suze Youance
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The Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne
Senator for Québec