

*UJPO to Government of Canada: Now is the Time to Take Further Action Against War and Genocide in Gaza*

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza and occupation and apartheid policies in the West Bank. These policies were summarized in a statement by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem (May 5, 2025), as "blocking the entry of food and humanitarian aid" that is "deliberately starving over two million people, including more than one million children."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told lawmakers (May 11, 2025) that Israel's war on Gaza is intended to render large parts of the territory uninhabitable, forcing Palestinians to flee and to ensure they will have "nowhere to return to." According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (May 25, 2025), if the blockade against humanitarian aid to Gaza continues, "71,000 children under the age of five will suffer from acute malnutrition over the coming year."

We echo the sentiment in a letter signed by three hundred and eighty writers and organizations in the U.K. (and the Republic of Ireland), calling for an immediate ceasefire: "The use of the words 'genocide' or 'acts of genocide' to describe what is happening in Gaza is no longer debated by international legal experts or human rights organizations. Just as it is true to call the atrocities committed by Hamas against innocent civilians on 7 October 2023 crimes of war and crimes against humanity, so today it is true to name the attack on the people of Gaza an atrocity of genocide."

Even as these atrocities continue unabated, those who speak out in solidarity with Palestinian lives are facing increasing repression amidst charges of "antisemitism". Opponents of these horrific policies face a backlash described by the BC Civil Liberties Association (March 13, 2025), as a growing "widespread pattern of professional discipline, loss of educational and training opportunities, harassment, and the criminalization of individuals who have exercised their right to free political expression in calling Israel's actions in Gaza a genocide and demanding those actions cease....The repression of support for Palestine seems to flow in part from the broad application and acceptance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism [which] erroneously conflates criticism of actions of the state of Israel with antisemitism."

As Jewish Canadians, we reject the weaponization of the language of antisemitism to silence criticism of violence of the State of Israel. Many of us have personal histories deeply connected to the destruction of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before and during the Holocaust. And we are painfully aware that internationally and in Canada, far right ethno-nationalist forces, and real acts of antisemitism, are on the rise. But it is precisely our understanding of this history, and our commitment to a longstanding Jewish tradition of social justice, that motivates us to condemn Israel's actions against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

In the face of both Israel's violence against the Palestinians and the repression and harassment of those who speak out against it, we welcome the statement – however belated – issued by the governments of Canada, the U.K. and France on May 19, 2025 opposing "the expansion of Israel's military operations in Gaza" and "permanent forced displacement" of Palestinians in

Gaza. The statement declares that: “We will not hesitate to take further action, including targeted sanctions.”

Now is the time to take such further action. The government of Canada should follow through and undertake an arms embargo on Israel (as demanded by the NDP since April 2024), which would entail an end to the exporting of weapons, components, and military technology by Canadian companies to Israel (including via the U.S.) and the purchase and permit of import of military technology from Israel.

UJPO stands with a growing international movement, in both the Jewish and general communities and including organizations in Israel such as Standing Together and Breaking the Silence, that advocate consistently for Palestinian rights.