

Canada-Israel Public Security Agreement. Canada involving Israel in the Americas, Despite Blatant Human Rights Violations

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Despite Concerns, Canada is involving Israel in the Americas

The department of Foreign Affairs announced yesterday that the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), Peter Kent, will be visiting Israel from August 31 to September 08 to launch Canada-Israel discussions on the Americas. Kent is set to meet with President Shimon Peres, Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Lieberman and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Daniel Ayalon, during his trip. He will also visit the West Bank, where he will meet Riad Malki, the Palestinian Authority's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On the eve of discussions, Kent stated, "As vibrant democratic states, Canada and Israel are natural allies. This affinity, based on our shared values, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, extends to our respective engagement in the Americas." The Minister's statement is puzzling given Israel's documented history of human rights violations and concomitant breach of international law. Under stated Canadian policy regarding the Middle East, Canada has officially recognized many of Israel's violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, the ongoing expansion of colonies (a.k.a. settlements) in the occupied territories, and Israel's construction of a wall on Palestinian land.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is concerned by the purpose of Minister of State Kent's trip to Israel and his statements on Canadian-Israeli relations. "Israel is not a good partner for Canada on the international stage, because Israel simply does not respect international law." said Thomas Woodley, president of CJPME. "The Canadian government is acting inconsistently by seeking to actively engage Israel in the geo-politics of the Americas, considering Israel's role in the current instability of the Middle East."

Israel has been a permanent observer to the Organization of American States (OAS), since 1972. Although countries, such as Argentina and Mexico, have maintained economic and military relationships with Israel over the decades, Israel's has seen an increase in criticism of its policies towards Palestinians by Latin American nations. During Israel's assault on Gaza in early 2009, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez expelled Israeli diplomats from the country as a sign of protest. Since then, Israel's interests in Caracas have been represented by the Canadian Embassy. Canada also represents Israel's consular interests in Cuba through its embassy in Havana.

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