

Canada Post Issues Stamp Commemorating Canada-Israel Relations, Despite Long-Standing Diplomatic Differences

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

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Toronto – Canada Post has announced that it will be issuing a stamp commemorating 60 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and Israel on April 14. According to an article in the Jewish Tribune, the name of the persons or organizations that proposed that such a commemorative stamp be issued are “secret.” The theme of the stamp is apparently “friendship.” Canada has previously issued joint stamps with Japan, China, Mexico, France and the US; with some of those countries, it has done so on more than one occasion. Canada Post’s announcement comes amid rising international criticism of Israel for its plans to build more illegal colonies (settlements) in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Traditionally Canada Post jointly issues stamps with other nations to celebrate joint achievements or historical events, for example the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, or environmental treaties. It is clear that the Canada-Israel stamp does not meet those criteria. While Canada and Israel have indeed maintained diplomatic relations for six decades, the relationship has been strained at many key junctures. Importantly, Israel has ignored Canada’s diplomatic opposition to all of the following:

- Israel’s military occupation since 1967 of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, which are Palestinian territory under the 1949 Armistice Agreement.

- Israel’s ongoing construction of further colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which totaled 285,800 and 193,700, respectively, as of the end of 2008. Over the years, Canada has frequently reproached Israel for its ongoing colonization of occupied Palestinian territory, most recently in March, 2010.

- Israel’s construction of a wall through and around Palestinian communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) questions the appropriateness of the joint issue of the Canada-Israel stamp at this time. “Announcing such a stamp now – on the heels of Israel’s brutal 22-day assault on Gaza last year and its recent declarations that it will construct more colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem despite strong international opposition – sends an entirely wrong signal to the Israeli government,” says CJPME President Thomas Woodley. He adds that the joint stamp announcement undermines the Canadian government’s own stated policies concerning Israel’s obligations.

“Canada should hold off on issuing a joint stamp until Israel has signed a comprehensive

peace agreement with the Palestinians – one in accordance with the Canadian value of respect for international law,” Woodley urged, noting “such a peace agreement, between Israelis and Palestinians – facilitated by Canadian diplomacy – would truly be something to celebrate.” CJPME also notes with disappointment that while the Israeli stamp of the joint issue is marked with both the Hebrew and Arabic version of “Israel,” as is typical with Israeli stamps, the Canadian version will only be printed with the Hebrew (and Canadian) name for Israel.

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