

Canada's NDP MPs Must Stop Being 'Friends' with Israel

By [Yves Engler](#)

Global Research, May 21, 2018

[Yves Engler](#) 19 May 2018

Region: [Canada, Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Featured image: MP Randall Garrison

Is it appropriate for NDP Members of Parliament to be working for "greater friendship" with a country that is killing and maiming thousands of non-violent protestors?

Would it have been appropriate for any elected member of the party to be a "friend" with South Africa's government during the apartheid era?

Victoria area MPs **Randall Garrison** (left) and **Murray Rankin** are members of the Canada Israel Interparliamentary Group (previously named Canada-Israel Friendship Group).

Garrison is vice-chair of a group designed to promote "greater friendship" and "cooperation" between the two countries' parliaments.

The chair of the group is York Centre MP **Michael Levitt**, a former board member of the explicitly racist Jewish National Fund, who issued a statement blaming " Hamas incitement" for Israeli forces shooting thousands of peaceful protestors, including Canadian doctor **Tarek Loubani**.

The Interparliamentary Group is one of many pro-Israel lobbying organizations in Canada. In conjunction with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, the Interparliamentary Group has hosted wine and cheese lobbying events on Parliament Hill. Three hundred parliamentarians and parliamentary staff attended their 2014 "Israeli Wine Meets Canadian Cheese" gathering in the East Block courtyard.

The group regularly meets the Israeli Ambassador and that country's other diplomats. Representatives of the Group also regularly visit Israel on sponsored trips. For their part, Garrison and Rankin both participated in CIJA-organized trips to Israel in 2016.

The Interparliamentary Group works with its Israeli counterpart the Israel-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group. In 2016 the Group sent a delegation to the Israeli Knesset and last year they organized a joint teleconference with Israel-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group co-chairs **Yoel Hasson** and **Anat Berko**.

Last month Hasson responded to Meretz party Chairwoman **Tamar Zandberg**'s call for an investigation into the Israel Defense Forces' killing of non-violent Palestinian protestors by tweeting, "there was nothing to investigate, the IDF is doing what's necessary to defend the Gaza border."

Chairman of the Zionist Union Knesset faction, Hasson opposed the UN resolution on a Palestinian state. When the Knesset voted to strip Arab MK **Hanin Zoabi** of parliamentary privileges for participating in the 2010 Gaza flotilla Hasson and MK **Carmel Shama** “nearly came to blows” with Zoabi and her fellow Balad party MK **Jamal Zahalka**. Hasson later called Zoabi a “terrorist”.

Berko is even more openly racist and anti-Palestinian. A Lieutenant-Colonel in the IDF reserves prior to her election with Likud, Berko openly disparaged African refugees. In February Israel National News reported,

“Berko said that the MKs should see the suffering that African migrants have caused South Tel Aviv residents before jetting off to Rwanda” to oppose an effort to deport mostly Eritrean and Sudanese refugees to the small East African nation.

In January Berko co-sponsored a bill to bypass a High Court ruling that Israeli forces cannot use the bodies of dead Palestinian protesters as bargaining chips. The aim of the bill was to make it harder for the bodies to be given over for burial, which should happen as soon as possible under Muslim ritual, in the hopes of preventing high profile funerals. In a 2016 Knesset debate Berko made the ridiculous claim that the absence of the letter “P” in the Arabic alphabet meant Palestine did not exist since “no people would give itself a name it couldn’t pronounce.” In response **Richard Silverstein** noted,

“Apparently, the fact that the word is spelled and pronounced with an ‘F’ (Falastin) in Arabic seems to have escaped her. It’s worth noting, too, that according to her logic, Israeli Jews do not exist either, since there is no letter ‘J’ in Hebrew.”

Garrison and Rankin must immediately withdraw from the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group. If the NDP MPs refuse to disassociate themselves from the pro-Israel lobby organization, party leader **Jagmeet Singh** should replace them as (respectively) NDP defence and justice critics.

Israel’s slaughter in Gaza should lead to an end of the NDP’s anti-Palestinian past.

Please join me in asking Garrison (Randall.Garrison@parl.gc.ca) and Rankin (Murray.Rankin@parl.gc.ca) to withdraw from the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group. Make sure to cc Jagmeet Singh (jagmeet@ndp.ca)

The original source of this article is [Yves Engler](#)

Copyright © [Yves Engler](#), [Yves Engler](#), 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **Yves Engler**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca