

Canada's NDP Will be Judged by the Friends They Keep in Israel

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Who exactly is the NDP making friends with in Israel?

*In refusing to heed a [call from 200](#) well-known musicians, academics, trade unionists and NDP members to withdraw from the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group (CIIG) the party leadership cites the need for “[dialogue](#)”. But, when **Jagmeet Singh, Hélène Laverdière, Murray Rankin** and others call for “[dialogue](#)” they don't specify who they are talking to.*

A quick Google search of CIIG's Israeli partner — the Israel-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group — shows that all 13 of its members have expressed views or proposed laws that most NDP members would consider odious. Below is a snapshot of the Israel-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group members — none of whom are from parties that represent Palestinian citizens of Israel — that Canadian MPs are creating relationships with:

Robert Ilatov proposed a bill in May to stop “[harassment by left-wing](#) operatives of Israeli soldiers” by criminalizing those who film Israeli troops repressing Palestinians. The bill states: “[Anyone who filmed](#), photographed, and/or recorded soldiers in the course of their duties, with the intention of undermining the spirit of IDF soldiers and residents of Israel, shall be liable to five years imprisonment.” Born and raised in the former Soviet Union, Ilatov also sponsored a bill to [strictly limit](#) the call to prayer from mosques and, in another attack against the 20-25% of Muslim and Christian Israelis, said it should be [mandatory for judges](#) to sing Israel's national anthem and adhere to “the idea of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.”

Yisrael Eichler called the assimilation of US Jews a “[quiet Holocaust](#)” and labelled criticism of men who refuse to sit next to women on El Al flights “[anti-Semitic](#)” and a form of “terrorism”. In 2009 Eichler demanded a “[stop \[to\] this wave](#) that is turning Israel into a refuge for Russian and African non-Jews as well as criminals who flee from their native countries.” In an anti-Jewish outburst, Eichler called a fellow Knesset member “a [Jewboy](#) who tattles on his fellow Jews.”

Yoav Ben Tzur told the Knesset in 2017: “[it is time](#) to stop being afraid. It is time to apply the law to Judea and Samaria [illegally occupied Palestinian West Bank] as an inseparable part of the state of Israel.” In a stunt that [required](#) a major military mobilization and led to a Palestinian being killed, Tzur was part of a mass prayer at Joseph's Tomb near the occupied Palestinian city of Nablus.

Yitzchak Vaknin told the Centre for Israel and Jewish affairs in 2013: “[I do not support](#) negotiations on Jerusalem at all. Jerusalem is our capital and of course we are

forbidden to speak on Jerusalem because if we speak about Jerusalem then we can discuss any other city in Israel.” In 2011 [Vaknin co-sponsored](#) a bill to annex the illegal Jewish settlements of Beitar Illit, Ma’ale Adumim, Giv’at Ze’ev, Gush Etzion and Efrat to the municipality of Jerusalem. Vaknin also co-sponsored [two bills](#) to forbid gay pride parades and in 2014 Vaknin called South Africa’s Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein “[erev rav](#)”, a derogatory term translated as “mixed multitude” or “mixed mob” of non-Jews who followed the Biblical Hebrews from Egypt and made their lives miserable.

Elazar Stern told Belgian newspaper *L’Echo* in January that “[all embassies](#) should be” in Jerusalem and that Europe should “stop supporting Palestinian terrorism.” [Stern co-sponsored](#) a recent bill calling on Israel to withhold some Palestinian customs duties it gathers as the occupying power.

Nachman Shai repeatedly justified the killing of Palestinians during his time as the Israeli military’s chief spokesman between 1988 and 1991. In 2015 he [ran to chair](#) the [explicitly racist](#) Jewish National Fund/Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael and called the term leftist “[a stain](#).”

Tali Ploskov [proposed a bill](#) to deter Israeli human rights groups that give tours detailing the mistreatment of Palestinians by increasing the penalty on unlicensed tour guides. She also co-sponsored a bill designed to fight the “[legal intifada](#)” by [raising the fees](#) for Palestinians to petition Israel’s top court and another [law empowering](#) the Minister of the Interior to revoke the residency status of Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem for “Breach of Allegiance”.

Mickey Levy, then commander of the Jerusalem police, [ordered the 2002 execution](#) of a Palestinian who had been captured and disarmed before he could detonate a suicide vest. Levy said Israel should [stop returning](#) the bodies of Palestinians they kill in acts of resistance and that their families should be expelled to Gaza “if they have relatives there.” When Arab Knesset member Hanin Zoabi called Israeli soldiers “murderers” in 2016, [reports the Jerusalem Post](#), Levy “rushed at Zoabi, nearly reaching her before he was stopped by Knesset ushers, shouting ‘You are filth!’ several times.”

Oded Forer [initiated the April impeachment](#) of Haneen Zoabi from the Knesset and legislation to disqualify Arab Knesset candidates for “[calling Israel](#) racist and calling upon countries to boycott and sanction it.” Saying “[the \[Arab\] Joint](#) List continues to prove that its MKs do not belong in the Knesset,” Forer claimed “[the Knesset](#) has become a place for terrorists and their supporters to sit in without fear.” Forer also submitted a bill — largely targeting tenured professors — that could impose up to 10 years in prison for those who incite violence against the state. Forer said: “[the expansion of incitement](#) to public events has become a real danger. Calls for incitement and for harm to be caused to the State of Israel should not be heard among the masses and certainly not in events and places financed with the money of Israeli taxpayers.”

Meirav Ben-Ari said the government should “[help](#)” Jews living in a Tel Aviv neighbourhood with many Africans. “You go to the south of Tel Aviv, it’s a different state,” Ben-Ari said. “It’s like Sudan mixed with Eritrea mixed with Darfur.” Ben-Ari added that she doesn’t go there because it’s too dangerous. In 2015 she called for the prosecution of an Arab member of the Knesset. “[A member](#) of Knesset who acts against the Knesset and the State of Israel, his immunity should be reconsidered.”

Sharren Haskel wrote recently about "[Palestinians' desire](#) to obliterate the Jewish future in the Middle East" and told CBC she "[would love](#) to see Canada move its embassy" to Jerusalem. In July Haskel initiated a [government program](#) "to prevent miscegenation" (romantic relationships between Jews and non-Jews). Using a Hebrew word that literally [translates as "assimilation,"](#) but is commonly used as a euphemism for miscegenation, she told *Israel Hayom* paper: "[Young \[Jewish\]](#) men and women from all over the world will arrive and form relationships with local young men and women, in order to prevent assimilation and strengthen the connection to Judaism."

In [this article](#) I detail some of the views of the two chairs of the Israel-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group. The more openly racist and anti-Palestinian of the two, Anat Berko just put forward a [bill to jail](#) individuals who display Palestinian flags at demonstrations and [expressed support](#) for a former soldier who shot and killed a wounded Palestinian in Hebron in 2016.

Which is the best way for the NDP to promote justice and peace? To accept and normalize such views and policies by making friends with these politicians? Or to withdraw from the CIIG to send a message that the State of Israel is currently on a path that is unacceptable to the NDP and its members?

Please ask Randall.Garrison@parl.gc.ca, murray.rankin@parl.gc.ca, cheryl.hardcastle@parl.gc.ca, gord.johns@parl.gc.ca and peter.julian@parl.gc.ca to withdraw from the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group.

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