

Whole-of-government Approach Needed to Address Canadian Complicity with Israeli Settlements

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

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CJPME

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*Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is calling on **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** to lead a "whole-of-government approach" to address the problem of Canadian collusion in war crimes related to illegal Israeli settlements. This initiative follows the recent "Great Israeli Real Estate" [events](#) in Montreal and Toronto, which involved the open sale of properties within illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. CJPME is urging Canada to crack down on such events and focus on ending other forms of Canadian complicity in settlements. To that end, CJPME has provided Prime Minister Trudeau and his cabinet with 19 policy recommendations based on the status of settlements as war crimes under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act.*

"Canadians buying properties in settlements is participation in an active war crime. Thanks to decades of impunity, Canadian complicity in Israel's settlements has gone completely unchecked. This requires a whole-of-government approach for Canada to end its involvement in Israel's colonial war crimes," said Alex Paterson, Senior Director, Parliamentary Affairs for CJPME. "For nearly 25 years after Canada adopted the Rome Statute into domestic law, successive leaders have continued to willfully ignore illegal Canadian involvement in Israeli land theft and colonization of Palestine. It's time to put these brazen war crimes to an end and meaningfully challenge Israel's policy of annexation."

CJPME notes that Canadian support for illegal Israeli settlements is a long-standing problem that touches on a range of Ministerial portfolios and crosscutting policy issues. For example, Canada [extends free trade benefits](#) to settlement businesses through the Canada-Israel Free

Trade Agreement (CIFTA), gives [charitable tax status](#) to organizations that funnel money to settlements, [votes against resolutions](#) to condemn settlements at the UN, and fails to discourage or penalize trade and investment in the settlement economy.

“While Canada’s long overdue promise to impose sanctions on a few extremist settlers would be a good start, meaningful action to target Israel’s colonial take-over of Palestinian land requires using all the tools available to the government,” added Paterson. “If Canada was interested in stopping Israeli land theft, it has numerous policy tools at its disposal to go beyond symbolism or half measures. It is actively choosing to avoid those measures while Israel starves and slaughters Palestinians.”

In a letter and position paper submitted to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last week, CJPME has offered a series of 19 policy recommendations which fall under seven different ministerial portfolios, from Foreign Affairs to Finance and Justice. Some of the key policy recommendations include:

1. Investigate and prosecute individuals involved in the transaction and promotion of the sale of settlement homes (Justice);
2. Divest the Canadian Pension Plan of its holdings in any of the companies that are listed in the UN database on business enterprises involved in Israeli settlements (Finance);
3. Instruct the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to conduct enhanced reviews of all foreign income for property or businesses owned in Israel and the OPT (National Revenue);
4. Impose economic sanctions on the Israeli settlement economy under the *Special Economic Measures Act*, including any individuals and entities involved in Israel’s illegal occupation and attempted annexation of East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank (Foreign Affairs);
5. Instruct the CBSA to deny entry to Canada of any foreign national who owns property in an Israeli settlement or outpost (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship);
6. Canada should suspend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) and end all trade with Israel’s settlements in the OPT (International Trade).

“The laws we need to address this issue have been on the books for nearly 25 years. This is simply an issue of the successive governments of Justin Trudeau, Stephen Harper, Paul Martin, and Jean Chrétien actively choosing to permit Canadian involvement in settlements. To me, it clearly shows as leaders that they care more about supporting Zionism through war crimes than upholding international law, and it is quite reflective of the systemic anti-Palestinian racism at the heart of both Liberal and Conservative foreign policies for decades. The rot is deep,” concluded Paterson.

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