

October 26, 2023

To the Honourable Minister Joly,

We write to you today to share our experiences as progressive Canadian Jews at this time of heartbreaking Israeli-Palestinian violence and to outline what we hope for from our government.

We thank you and the Canadian government for your actions in recent weeks. We especially appreciate your immediate condemnation of Hamas, as well as your efforts to free the hostages in Gaza, to provide humanitarian aid for Gazans, and to stand against antisemitism and Islamophobia here at home.

Our community has been deeply affected by the horror of Hamas' massacres on October 7th. Many of us have relatives and friends in the Israeli communities close to Gaza, including some of us who grew up with the Canadian citizens murdered and kidnapped by Hamas on that black day. We have been shocked and even worried for our safety following voices in Canada that justified or minimized Hamas' actions.

Our community is also deeply worried about the safety of Palestinian friends and partners in the West Bank and Gaza. These are our civil society allies, with whom we have worked for decades to break the violent cycle of dehumanization, terrorism and occupation. We are heartbroken about the mounting losses of innocent lives.

We urge you to do more to de-escalate the war and protect innocent lives. In unity with our Jewish and Arab partners in Israel, we plead that the Canadian government do the following:

1. We urge you to do everything possible to secure the safe return of all hostages, including Canadian-Israeli peace activist and friend Vivian Silver.
2. We urge you to ensure the humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza are met and that Israel adheres to international laws of war where the lives and well-being of civilians are at risk.
3. We urge you to press Israeli authorities to curb the rising settler violence in the West Bank that could lead to further violent escalation.

In the coming year, it will be vital that the Canadian government engage its allies fully in creating a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

Thank you for your friendship in these difficult times among all of us who care about the Middle East.

Sincerely,



Linda HersHKovitz
President



Ben Murane
Executive Director