

Canada's Role in Israel-Palestine: Our Perspective and Priorities.



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WHO WE ARE:

JSpaceCanada is a pro-Israel, pro-peace Jewish Zionist organization. We champion a two-state solution in Israel-Palestine.

Our Story:

JSpaceCanada is the home for Canadian Jews who are deeply committed to self-determination for Jews and Palestinians. Our organization formed because voices like ours need to be louder. As Jewish Zionists, we are stakeholders in Israel, and therefore have a role to play in ensuring Israel's future as a democratic state. For this to happen, we must be able to engage critically in conversations about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Our Mission:

To build a Canadian Jewish community that is a leader in promoting solutions for peace. We will achieve our mission through:

- Advocacy to promote pro-peace policies within our national and local institutions.
- Offering educational experiences that bring diverse viewpoints and foster meaningful dialogue.
- Training and supporting youth to shift our community's conversation about Israel.



Our Vision:

Our vision is self-determination for the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, championed by the Canadian Jewish community.

Our Values:

Self-Determination: We are committed to safety and self-determination for both Jews and Palestinians.

Inclusivity: We believe in engaging with the multiple perspectives in our community with empathy.

Bridge-building: We engage diverse groups, starting from places of comfort and humanity that lead to exploration.

Education: We work to broaden perspectives about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Efficiency: We're committed to evolving our governance and operations to strengthen our reach and impact.



CANADIAN-JEWISH SENTIMENT:

The vast majority of the Canadian Jewish community expresses strong attachment to Israel, with 94% believing that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state and 84% reporting an emotional connection to the country. However, this support does not necessarily extend to any particular Israeli government. A plurality to a majority of Canadian Jews are critical of various issues, including but not limited to:

- * Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's actions are perceived as undermining Israeli democracy (59% believe the government of Israel is moving in the wrong direction, while only 13% support the government's direction).
- * The expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank (one in three Canadian Jews believe settlement construction and expansion harm Israel's security).
- * The presence of extremist Knesset members such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich (58% believe the Canadian government should refuse to engage with or build relationships with these officials).

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

The Israel-Hamas War:

JSpaceCanada calls for an end to the war in Gaza, the release of all hostages, and a comprehensive post-war strategy that ensures the removal of Hamas through strengthening the Palestinian Authority and fostering partnerships with moderate Arab states.

The Canadian Government Should:

- Reaffirm its commitment to ending the war and securing the release of all hostages. While not a key player, Canada should leverage its diplomatic ties to advocate for continued negotiations rather than renewed conflict.
- Collaborate with international allies to support the unification of the Palestinian Territories and reinforce the Palestinian Authority's governance in both the West Bank and Gaza.
- Support security guarantees for both Israelis and Palestinians and back a UN Security Council resolution that commits member nations to diplomatic or economic responses to aggression against either party.
- Consider a temporary peacekeeping role in sensitive areas in partnership with international allies and moderate Arab states.

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

Aid and Security:

JSpaceCanada opposes a blanket arms embargo on Israel, recognizing its legitimate security concerns. Canada must support Israel's need for security assurances while ensuring arms exports align with Canadian values and laws. For Palestinians, JSpaceCanada supports the government's recommitment to UNRWA funding, acknowledging its role in providing essential services amid ongoing political crises.

The Canadian Government Should:

- Review all bilateral agreements with Israel to ensure alignment with Canadian policy. As with all allies, Israel must be held to the standards outlined in the Export and Import Permits Act.
- Ensure arms sales address Israel's security needs without enabling actions that undermine security, violate Palestinian rights, contravene international law, or conflict with Canada's values and interests.
- Maintain funding for UNRWA while actively working to resolve the conflict that leaves millions of Palestinians stateless and dependent on international aid.

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

Settlements:

JSpaceCanada opposes settlement expansions, home demolitions, movement restrictions, and other forms of de facto annexation in the occupied West Bank. In 2024, the Netanyahu government accelerated de facto annexation through settlement expansion, legal restructuring, and forced Palestinian displacement. Over 59 new outposts were established, 114 kilometers of roads were constructed to support settlements, and nearly 10,000 housing units were approved. Settler violence increased. Protective interventions by the police or the IDF were minimal, while over 1,000 Palestinian structures were demolished. Powers over settlements shifted from military to civilian authorities under Minister Smotrich, further entrenching Israeli control. Billions of shekels were allocated to unauthorized outposts, and roadblocks intensified movement restrictions, expanding settler-only highways. These combined measures have solidified Israeli dominance over the West Bank.

JSpaceCanada maintains its principled opposition to Israeli settlement expansion, recognizing it as a significant threat to Israel's long-term security, the viability of a two-state solution, and the prospects for a just and lasting peace. Settlements undermine the possibility for both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security, and sovereignty—core to our stated mission. We support a two-state solution: an independent Jewish state of Israel alongside an independent Arab state of Palestine. In alignment with this vision, we oppose the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which does not distinguish between Israel proper and the occupied territories.

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

The Canadian Government Should:

- Continue implementing sanctions on entities, organizations, and individuals involved in financing or supporting settler violence and annexation.
- Impose sanctions, including entry bans, on Israeli politicians and officials, such as Bezalel Smotrich, who actively pursue the de jure annexation of the West Bank.
- Ban imported products from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, defined as the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in accordance with the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion from July of 2024. Maintain or strengthen trade with Israeli companies and businesses operating within Israel "proper" (within the Green Line).
- Increase support for Palestinian construction and development in Area C through the West Bank Protection Consortium and oppose Israel's halting, demolition, or seizure of Palestinian structures and evictions from towns and villages.

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

Two-State Solution:

JSpaceCanada supports a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israelis and Palestinians must negotiate a peace agreement leading to two states, with international support. Borders should be based on the 1967 lines, including the removal of most settlements, with any adjustments achieved through mutually agreed land swaps. The Palestinian state must be contiguous, politically and economically viable, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Despite ongoing challenges, polling consistently indicates a plurality of Israelis and Palestinians prefer a two-state solution.

The Canadian Government Should:

- Explore recommendations from JSpaceCanada's Executive Director, Maytal Kowalski, and JSpaceCanada Policy Centre Chair, Former Canadian Ambassador to Israel, Jon Allen, from the Foreign Affairs Committee hearings in November 2024 on advancing a two-state solution.
- Recognize a Palestinian state alongside Israel in alignment with the two-state framework. This serves to both undermine Hamas's rejectionist stance by bolstering the Palestinian Authority and undermines the current Israel government's rejectionist stance through the veto that Israel has in the process.
- Reiterate Canada's official position that a two-state solution is the only viable resolution to the conflict. As the current Israeli government seeks to obstruct this solution, Canada must remain steadfast in its commitment.

JSPACECANADA POLICY PRIORITIES

Shared Democratic Values:

JSpaceCanada prioritizes the shared democratic values and commitment to international law that form the foundation of the Canada-Israel relationship. Post-Second World War international institutions have played a crucial role in maintaining global stability and upholding legal norms. Recent actions by the Israeli government—such as advancing annexation through the so-called “sovereignty road” in the occupied West Bank, withholding food, medicine, and water, and implementing processes aimed at displacing 2.2 million Palestinians from their homes in Gaza—constitute violations of international law and, as such, threaten the democratic principles that underpin our relationship with Israel.

The Canadian Government Should:

- Emphasize that the Canada-Israel relationship is based on shared democratic values, pluralism, and checks and balances. Any erosion of these principles jeopardizes this relationship.
- Respect and uphold decisions by the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice.
- Defend appropriate and accurate criticism of policies such as evictions, demolitions, forced relocations, and settlement expansion in international forums, including the United Nations.