



November 1, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

**Re: Need for a Ceasefire and Humanitarian corridor to
secure the rights, security and safe passage of civilians in
Palestine and Israel**

Dear Prime Minister,

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is Canada's leading voice for the rights, protection, sponsorship, settlement, and well-being of refugees and migrants, in Canada and globally. CCR is driven by 200 member organizations working with, from, and for these communities, who have seen and know first-hand the lasting and intergenerational impacts of forced displacement and war.

Prime Minister, the CCR urges you to call unequivocally for a ceasefire to protect civilian populations in Palestine and Israel, in addition to calling for the release of hostages and anyone held in unlawful or arbitrary detention. The ongoing attacks on civilians are in direct contravention of International Law and must all be condemned – there can be no double standard in Canadian protection of human life and outrage at violations of human rights.



CCR and its members are alarmed at the widening humanitarian disaster and death toll in Gaza, the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem this week, including yesterday's airstrike on the Jabalia refugee camp. We note with grave concern the forced displacement of Palestinians, who have no possibility either to stay home or to flee in safety or security. The United Nations is estimating 1.4 million people have been displaced in Gaza, with no or rapidly declining access to food, water, fuel, electricity, telecommunications and medical assistance.

We welcome and reiterate your call for the creation of humanitarian corridors to allow the safe passage of food, medical supplies, fuel, water and other essential aid to millions of people who are trapped in Gaza. What little aid is getting through is nowhere near what is needed and we ask that Canada advocate more forcefully that the necessary aid and supplies make it to those who so desperately need it. At the same time, we note that such corridors are impossible to sustain in the context of the ongoing bombing and loss of life. In these conditions, it is not enough to call for humanitarian access while refusing to unequivocally call for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire.

CCR grieves the loss of life, and the rupture of families, which shows no sign of attenuation. Such violence not only destroys the lives of those immediately affected but causes trauma for generations. Even now refugees and war affected populations the world over, including many Canadians, are suffering from re-traumatization as the news unfurls in horror across media channels. The violence must end.

At home we must also stand firm against racism and hate, including Islamophobia, Anti-semitism, and Anti-Palestinian racism, which have sadly been on the rise in Canada in the context of these events.



The CCR recognizes and salutes all those working for peace, development, and justice in the region, including those who have placed their lives on the line to provide humanitarian support and report on death tolls and devastation, often at tragic personal cost.

We urge the Canadian government to devote additional resources to work for the safe return of Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents trapped in the region, and to allow them to be accompanied, where requested, by their family members who may not hold Canadian status, as soon as conditions allow. This must be accompanied by expedited family reunification including for family members of Protected Persons in Canada.

We also urge consideration of means to accelerate processing for refugees in the region destined for resettlement to Canada who are affected or threatened by the widening shadow of violence, notably refugees in Lebanon and Israel. We recommend that the government expand the number of individuals processed under the Urgent Protection Program with special considerations for pathways for vulnerable groups including LGBTQIA+ populations, and unaccompanied minors to find safety and refuge in Canada.

The crisis in the region highlights once again the need for Canada to adopt a framework for immigration responses to emergencies, to ensure expeditious and equitable action by Canada whenever a disaster unfolds and causes widespread displacement.

Together with our members we will continue to work for the safety and human rights of those threatened by forced displacement and violence, and reaffirm our commitment to work with others for a lasting and just peace for all in the region.



We stand ready to work with the Canadian government including Global Affairs and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada as needed to act in support of these goals.

Sincerely,

Aleks Dughman-Manzur
President

Cc:

Hon. Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada
Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada
Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development