

## **Letter to Prime Minister Harper**

**- Dr. Ismail Zayid, Canada Palestine Association -**

Dear Mr. Harper:

The vicious assault by the Israeli government on the people of Gaza, killing and injuring hundreds, including scores of innocent civilians, is a criminal act that defies international law and has been condemned by international human rights organisations. Taking that into consideration, we find the statement made by our government voiced by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lawrence Cannon, incredible. He states: "Israel has a clear right to defend itself against the continued rocket attacks by Palestinian militant groups which have deliberately targeted civilians. First and foremost, those rocket attacks must stop. " This statement is clearly lacking in any human consideration and balanced judgement. Is Mr. Cannon aware of the genocidal siege that has been imposed, for months, on the 1.5 million people in Gaza, denying them food, water, medicines, fuel and all basic needs of human existence? Is our government aware of the state of affairs that has existed in Gaza for years enclosing its population, in an existence of an open prison, denied, by Israel, any access to the outside world? These appalling conditions, to which the people in Gaza have been subjected, have been condemned by UN observers and all international and Israeli human rights groups, including Amnesty International and Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem. Does Mr. Cannon consider the Palestinians have the right to defend themselves? It was Israel that first violated, on Nov. 4, the ceasefire that existed for six months, before any of the ineffective rockets that have been used by the people in Gaza. The rockets fired this week were again preceded by Israeli bombing attacks that killed a number of Palestinians. Furthermore, is our government aware that Israel has been maintaining an oppressive illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip? This illegal occupation has been allowed to stand for over 40 years, in defiance of international law and repeated Security Council resolutions. The practices adopted in this illegal occupation are in violation of virtually every article of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and are considered, by international law, as war crimes. Our country, has a reputation of peacekeeping and upholding the UN Charter and human rights. In this spirit, we call on our government to condemn these Israeli practices and demand a complete termination to this illegal occupation.

Yours sincerely,

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President  
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