

Feb. 20 2024

## Open Letter from the Group of 78

To the Rt. Hon Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister  
Dear Prime Minister:

The Group of 78, a Canadian civil society organization that works for peace, economic and social justice, and planetary survival, is calling on the Government of Canada to take immediate and meaningful action to counteract the increasing risk of genocide in Gaza.

First, we would like to reiterate our earlier condemnation of the war crimes committed by Hamas in its incursions into Israel on October 7. The perpetrators should be held to account and brought to justice. However, the war crimes of Hamas cannot be used to justify the war crimes, crimes against humanity and plausibly genocidal acts committed ostensibly in self-defence by Israel since October 7.

In November, 36 UN experts warned that Israel's actions in Gaza point to a "genocide in the making." In January, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that there is a plausible case of genocide in Gaza and ordered Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of genocidal acts. The Canadian government has not only ignored these warnings, but its actions are also exacerbating the crisis.

By transferring weapons into the theatre of war which is plausibly genocidal, and knowingly withdrawing support for Gaza's humanitarian infrastructure, the actions of the Government of Canada directly violate the ICJ's orders. Additionally, Canada has put up unnecessary barriers that complicate the ability of family members to flee and seek refuge in Canada.

We cannot accept this to be Canada's legacy amid the horrific devastation and rising death toll unfolding before our eyes in Gaza. We demand that:

1. Canada declare unequivocal support for the ICJ's recommended emergency measures; Israel comply with the court's rulings to prevent genocide in Gaza; and ensure that Canadian policy also complies with the rulings, and is not contributing to genocidal acts. The focus on protection of civilians must be uppermost. We insist on an immediate ceasefire from all sides, demand increased humanitarian aid to the populations in need, and take action by delivering this support as soon as possible. An essential step must be the imposition of an embargo on Canada-Israel military trade, which amounts to arming the perpetrator of plausibly genocidal acts;
2. Canada unconditionally restore support to UNRWA, which is the foundation of the humanitarian infrastructure for Palestinians. We also insist that Canada double its existing funding commitments to UNRWA for the next three years;
3. Canada remove the arbitrary, discriminatory and ultimately racist barriers on family reunification visas for Gaza, and fast track the process to bring loved ones from Palestine out of harm's way.

We are copying your cabinet colleagues, Ministers Joly, Hussen and Miller, for their attention.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Culpeper, Chair, Group of 78

cc Hon Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs

cc Hon Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development

cc Hon Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship