

November 6, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
pm@pm.gc.ca

Prime Minister Trudeau,

Re: Canadian support for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza

On behalf of Unifor and our 315,000 members across Canada, we wish to express our extreme concern and disappointment in the government's continued lack of support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The humanitarian crisis currently unfolding in the region, including the unprecedented killing of Palestinians – especially women, children and journalists – is a serious violation of human rights. We are bearing witness to a level of atrocity that will be felt for generations to come and significantly hamper any efforts towards fostering peace between Israel and Palestine.

Unifor unequivocally condemns the Hamas attacks against innocent Israeli civilians. The level of disproportionate and escalating retaliation and non-stop bombardment by the Israeli military against the people of Gaza must be equally condemned.

At the time of this letter, it is reported that over 10,000 Palestinians have been killed – more than 3,700 of them children. The global NGO, Save the Children, has reported that more children have been killed in Gaza over the past three weeks than the total number in global conflicts since 2019, combined. The number of wounded also continues to rise, currently at 32,000. Further, the Israeli government's intentional restriction of essential aid, including medicine, food, water and fuel to the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza is in flagrant violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

In response to these appalling figures, we were shocked to see Canada abstain on a vote calling for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce at the UN General Assembly on October 27. An abstention on such a significant vote demonstrates to the world Canada's passive acceptance to the ongoing attacks on civilians. This is totally unacceptable for a country that prides itself on being a human rights leader on the world stage. The government's stance advancing "humanitarian pauses" only to eventually allow for continued military assaults and violence, is not a viable solution.

As a social justice organization that promotes peace, Unifor denounces war, aggression, terrorism and conflict which unnecessarily endangers workers, families and communities.

Recently, Unifor, along with over 160 Canadian labour, peace, human rights and community organizations across Canada, has signed onto a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire of all hostilities in Israel-Palestine and for end to the blockade of Gaza to restore humanitarian aid and the necessities of life. Like many, we are fearful that continued attacks will only further intensify and spread across the region, further fueling increased hate, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism.

We hope Canada will demonstrate courage and leadership by joining the growing international call to put an end to the violence between the two sides and ending the siege, boosting humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and assist in brokering talks to free the remaining hostages. In the long-term, Canada must play a key role in addressing the roots of this conflict by helping to facilitate a lasting peace agreement so that both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and break the ongoing cycle of war and occupation.

We thank you for your time and consideration on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lana Payne', written in a cursive style.

Lana Payne
National President

cc: Minister Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P., Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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