

Mr Sid Ryan
President, CUPE Ontario
801-305 Milner Av.
Scarborough, Ontario
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October 6, 2006

Dear Mr. Ryan:

We, the undersigned organizations, would like to congratulate you and thank you for the principled and courageous stand that the CUPE Ontario has taken in support of a just peace in the Middle East. Your position reflects true respect for our Canadian values and international laws.

The international community was able—albeit belatedly—to bring an end to the Israeli military attacks on Lebanon. But this same international community continues to turn a blind eye to the devastation that the Palestinian people have been subjected to for generations. Just as an example, the UN Security Council Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948 calling explicitly for the Palestine refugees' right of return to their land and their confiscated homes has yet to be implemented, fifty eight years on.

To make things worse, Palestinian people are now being punished for exercising their democratic rights in an election which Canadian observers confirmed was run in a fair and efficient manner. The inhumane conditions imposed by the Israeli government by withholding the Palestinians rightful taxes and the international community withholding desperately needed aid has left the Palestinian people in an intolerable condition. By all accounts, the situation in Gaza is simply disastrous (see the attached CBC report).

While these injustices of historic proportions continue unabated - in which not even schools, hospitals and public utilities have been spared - you and CUPE Ontario are among the few who have stood up and demanded that the humanity of the oppressed Palestinian people be recognized and respected. Thank you for this historic and courageous stand.

On behalf of the undersigned,

Tyseer Aboulnasr, O.ONT.

cc. Mr Paul Moist, National President, CUPE

Muslim-Canadian organizations supporting this request

(listed alphabetically)

Ahlul Bayt Centre (Ottawa)
www.ahlul-bayt.org

representing Shi'a Muslims in Ottawa

Canadian Islamic Congress
www.canadianislamiccongress.com

Coalition of Muslim Organizations (COMO) (Toronto) representing the organizations below
www.comocanada.org

Al-Ansar Masjid
Anatolia Islamic Centre
Bin Abbas Mosque
International Muslims Organizations(IMO)

IRFAN-Canada
Islamic Forum of Canada
Islamic Information & Dawah Centre
Islamic Propagation Centre(Coopers)
Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque(SISCA)
Masjid-E Farooq-E Azam
Masjid Rahamat
Muslim Community Centre of Canada(MCCC)

Shiak Deedat Center
Somali Relief Network of North America

UM Media/UM Financial Inc
ANSARCO INC
Fatih Mosque
Islamic Foundation of Toronto
Islamic Society of Toronto(DarulSalaam)

Muslim World League
Taric Mosque
World Assembly of Muslim Youth Canada(WAMY)

Jamat-E-Islahul Muslemin of Mississauga
Imdadul Islamic Jamat of Toronto
Bosnian Islamic Centre
Jamia Islamia Canada
Shalimar Community Services Inc.
Shabab Islamic Centre
Malton Islamic Centre

Dar Al Tawheed Islamic Centre

Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities
www.theecmc.com representing Muslim organizations in Edmonton

Islamic Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Canada
www.islamabc.org representing Sh'ia organizations across Canada

Islamic Circle of North America
www.icnacanada.org representing various mosques and organizations

Islamic Society of Kingston
www.kingstonmuslims.net

Islamic Society of North America (Canada)
www.isnacanada.com representing various mosques and organizations

Islamic Supreme Council of Canada
www.islamicsupremecouncil.com

Jamiatul Muslemin of Toronto
www.madinahmasjid.org

Muslim Association of Canada representing several mosques and community centers across Canada
www.macnet.ca

Muslim Community Council of Ottawa Gatineau (MCCOG)
representing over 25 community associations in Ottawa

Muslim Council of Calgary
www.muslimsofcalgary.com representing Muslim associations in Calgary

Muslim Council of Montreal
www.muslimcouncil.org representing several Muslim organizations in Montreal

Ottawa Muslim Association
www.omaonline.ca

Salaheddin Islamic Centre
www.salaheddin.org

The British Columbia Muslim Association
www.thebcma.com representing mosques and Islamic centers across British Columbia

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CANADA ADDING TO 'TRAGIC' CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIANS: UN OFFICIAL

Canada is partly to blame for allowing human rights for Palestinians to deteriorate to a new low, a UN rights expert says.

John Dugard said Palestinians are subjected to "tragic" conditions in Gaza and the West Bank.

He criticized Canada, Israel, the U.S. and western European countries for cutting off funding to the Palestinian Authority after Hamas' victory in legislative elections in January.

Those countries have said funding will remain cut off unless the militant group renounces violence and recognizes Israel.

"In effect, the Palestinian people have been subjected to economic sanctions — the first time an occupied people has been so treated," Dugard said. "Palestinian people are punished for having democratically elected a regime unacceptable to Israel, the U.S. and the EU."

Dugard said Israel was largely responsible for the "intolerable" situation for Palestinians, three-quarters of whom depend on food aid. He also blamed its military incursions and tough roadblocks for preventing hospitals from having enough electricity and for damaging or destroying numerous schools and houses.

"Gaza is a prison and Israel seems to have thrown away the key," Dugard said. "A serious humanitarian crisis prevails in the West Bank."

Dugard said the situation is worse now than at any other time during his mandate. He said Israel's reaction to the kidnapping of a soldier in June led to the deaths of more than 100 civilians and the wounding of many.

"What Israel chooses to describe as collateral damage to the civilian population is, in fact, indiscriminate killing prohibited by international law," he said.

But Itzhak Levanon, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, said Dugard's allegations were "one-sided" and he described the situation as "over-simplified."

"This report is characterized by errors of omission as well as distortions of both fact and law," he said.

With files from the Associated Press
