



Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
580 Sainte-Croix, Suite 060
Saint-Laurent, QC H4L 3X5
Dec. 5, 2022

Ms. Donna Noade Reardon, Mayor
Saint John City Councillors

Dear Ms. Noade Reardon and City Councillors,

I am writing to express my thanks to the City of Saint John for its decision to raise the Palestinian flag on November 29th, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This is an important gesture that demonstrates the city's commitment to building bridges and promoting understanding between cultures and nations.

I am writing to you as President of the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME, www.cjpme.org), an organization that has over 200,000 adherents, and local groups and volunteers in all of Canada's Major cities. CJPME's mission is to enable Canadians of all backgrounds to promote justice, development, and peace in the Middle East, and here at home in Canada.

Raising the Palestinian flag on Nov. 29 is a powerful symbolic act that shows respect for the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination and freedom. It is also a strong statement of solidarity with those everywhere who are struggling against injustice, occupation and oppression. The flag reminds people of the long-standing injustices inflicted on Palestinians by Israel, which have been ongoing for decades. Raising it on this day serves as a reminder of the importance of speaking out against injustice and standing in solidarity with those who are suffering.

The action taken by Saint John also sends a message of hope to Palestinians living in Canada, under Israeli military occupation, or in refugee camps around the world. It shows them that there are others around the world who care about their plight and are willing to take a symbolic stand in support of their rights. This is especially important now, when Palestinians are facing increasing levels of repression and violence from Israel: all of the major human rights organizations of the world, including [Amnesty International](#)¹, [Human Rights Watch](#)², and Israel-based [B'Tselem](#)³ have recently issued reports detailing how Israel is practicing apartheid against Palestinians. Just as black South Africans sought freedom from the shackles of Apartheid South Africa, Palestinians will naturally seek freedom from Israeli apartheid. As such, the flag serves as a reminder that they are not alone in their struggle and that there are people around the world who stand with them in solidarity.

The move also sends a message to other cities across Canada and around the world that we must all continue our efforts to promote peace, justice and understanding between peoples. We should strive to create an environment where all peoples can coexist peacefully and without fear of violence or oppression. We must continue to speak out against injustice wherever it exists, whether in our own communities or abroad.

Finally, I believe that raising the Palestinian flag on this day serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility towards creating a better future for all people, regardless of their background or



nationality. We must continue to work together towards achieving peace and justice for all, which can only be achieved if we can come together in mutual understanding and respect.

Again, thank you for your important gesture. Should you wish to reach out to me for any reason, I am happy to meet via phone or Zoom at any time. I can be reached at 438-380-5410.

Respectfully,

Thomas E. Woodley
President, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

¹ “Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians,” Amnesty International, February 1, 2022, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>

² “A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and persecution,” Human Rights Watch, April 27, 2021, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

³ “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid,” B’Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), January 12, 2021, accessed Nov. 9, 2022 at https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid