

Coalition Against Israel's War Crimes - Media Communiqué

Date: October 31st, 2005

The Coalition Against Israel's War Crimes delivered a letter on October 28 to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration asking him to prohibit Ariel Sharon from entering Canada pursuant to section 35 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), which renders individuals guilty of committing war crimes or crimes against humanity inadmissible for entry. Sharon is scheduled to speak on November 14 at the United Jewish Communities 2005 General Assembly being held in Toronto and one of the invited speakers is Irwin Cotler, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

The letter has been endorsed so far by 71 organizations across Canada including Lawyers Against the War, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Canadian Section, Canadian Arab Federation, Canadian Islamic Congress, Al-Awda - Palestine Right of Return, Canadian Peace Alliance, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War, Canadian Union of Public Employees - Toronto District, and Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation.

The letter further asks that the Minister of Foreign Affairs exercise his authority under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and declare Sharon persona non grata so that any entry he might make will be denied the protection of diplomatic immunity.

Canada has obligations, under several international conventions to which it is a party, to arrest and prosecute international criminals such as Ariel Sharon. In pursuance of some of these obligations Canada has enacted the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act 2000. Hence, the letter also requests, should Sharon nevertheless enter Canada, that the Attorney General or Deputy Attorney General commence proceedings under section 9(3) of the War Crimes Act to have him prosecuted for the offence of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, contrary to section 6 of the War Crimes Act.

Sharon's responsibility for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity as a result of his role in the 1982 Sabra and Shatilla massacres has been well-documented. In addition, multiple sources have documented continuous breaches of international law that have occurred throughout Sharon's tenure and under his direction and tacit authority.

Amnesty International, B'Tselem, Human Rights Watch and United Nations organs have reported incidences in which the Israeli government committed war crimes or crimes against humanity with respect to combatants as well as civilians. The documents attached and referred to in the letter include 600 pages of reports from government and non-governmental organizations, as well as reports published in the International media.

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The following 70 organizations have so far endorsed the letter:

Al-Awda - Palestine Right of Return - Toronto (Al-Awda)

Al-Huda Lebanese Muslim Society

Al-Wilayat Islamic Center of Hamilton

Arab Law Student's Association, Osgood Hall (ALSA)

Alternative Perspective Media / Regard Alternative Media (ARM-RAM)

Arab Students' Collective (University of Toronto)

Arab Students' Collective (York University)

Canada Palestine Association (CPA), Halifax

Canada Palestine Association (CPA), Vancouver

Canada-Palestine Support Network (Ottawa)

Canadian Arab Federation

Canadian Arab Human Rights Organisation (Montreal)

Canadian Druze Society

Canadians for Jerusalem (CFJ)

Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC)

Canadian Muslim Forum (CMF)

Canadian Palestinian Foundation of Quebec (CPFQ)

Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA)

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) - Toronto District

Centre de ressources sur la non-violence, Montréal

Coalition for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

Coalition of Arab Canadian Professionals & Community Associations(CAPCA), Ottawa

Creative Response

CUPE's International Solidarity Committee - Ontario Division

Hamilton Council of Canadian Arabs (HCCA)

Hamilton Muslim Association

Ihya Foundation

International Women's Peace Service (IWPS)

Islamic Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Canada

Islamic Forum of Canada, Brampton

Islamic Foundation of Toronto

Islamic Society of York Region

Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation (JWCEO)

Jordan Canadian Friendship Society

La Fondation Canado-Algerienne du Quebec

Lawyers Against the War (LAW)

Medical Aid for Palestine (MAP)

Moroccan Association of Toronto

Movement for Universal Justice

Muslim Canadian Congress

Muslim Council of Montreal

Muslim Unity Group

Near East Cultural Education Foundation (NECEF)

Niagara Coalition for Peace (NC4P)

Niagara Palestinian Association (NPA)

November 16 Coalition (N16C)

Palestine Community Centre, Vancouver

Palestine House

Palestine Solidarity Group, Vancouver

Palestinian & Jewish Unity / Palestiniens et Juifs Unis (PAJU) - Montréal

Pickering Islamic Centre

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR)

Solidarity for Palestinian Rights (SFPR), University of Waterloo

SPHR Carleton University

SPHR McMaster University

SPHR University of Western University

SPHR York University

Socialist Action

StopWar.ca Coalition, Vancouver

Students for Peace in Iraq (University of Toronto)

Sumoud Political Prisoners Solidarity Group (Sumoud)

Syrian Arab Association of Canada

Syrian Canadian Cultural Association

Teach-In on Diversity, Democracy and Dissent within the Jewish Community

The Muslim Services, Toronto

Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (TCSW)

Toronto Forum on Cuba

United Front Canada

Voice of Palestine, Vancouver

Women for Palestine

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Canadian Section