

CANADA PALESTINE ASSOCIATION
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QUESTIONNAIRE ELECTION 2000

TO: NATIONAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS

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The dehumanization process that is now taking place in Canada, against the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in specific, greatly alarms us in the Palestinian-Canadian community. The official government pro-Israeli positions coupled by vicious media distortions of historic facts leaves us with a sense of frustration and anger. We feel that the blind, unconditional and longstanding Canadian government support to Israel is at the heart of this problem. We also feel that Canada should play a fair and humane role to rectify the injustices (to which Canada was party) against the Palestinian people. This is not only in the interest of peace in the Middle East, but also in the strategic interests of the Canadian people.

We are asking the major Canadian parties to answer the following questions of utmost concern to the Palestinian community. We will publicize these answers to our community through any and all available media. We are asking you to kindly respond to this questionnaire by Nov.7, 2000, by email hkawas@msn.com or by fax 604-588-7983.

1.The security of Israel is the first point in “Canada’s Position on Key Issues”, referring to it as “a fundamental aspect of the policy of successive Canadian governments since the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948”. The security of Israel has never been in doubt, it has one of the strongest armies in the world with “seven nuclear installations and as many as 200 nuclear weapons, according to an analysis of satellite photos by Jane’s Intelligence Review”(The Chicago Tribune, Nov.19/1994). The security of the Palestinian people, the indigenous people, is never mentioned in this Canadian document issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 1996. Would your party if elected adopt a more balanced policy towards the security of peoples in the region and what steps would you take to rectify the current imbalance?

2.If elected, would your government ask for the immediate and unconditional end of 33 years of Israeli occupation of all Arab lands in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 242and 338?

3.After 51 years of Canada recognizing Israel as a state and after seven years of the PLO recognizing Israel’s right to exist, Canada still does not recognize Palestine as a country, a nation nor as a state. Would you immediately recognize Palestine as a country, a nation and as a state without preconditions?

4.While publicly Canada declares that Jewish settlements are “contrary to international law”, it is concretely supporting Israeli occupation by giving tax deductible status to the “Jewish National Fund”, which helps in supporting the illegal settlements in the occupied territories including Jerusalem according to the Israeli group “Peace Now”. Canada gives tax deductions to many other Israeli projects, including the infamous “Canada Park” which stands on the rubble of three Palestinian towns occupied in1967. Canada also does not require the screening of Israeli products made in the illegal

Jewish settlements; these products enjoy the benefits of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. Will you, if you form the next government, take steps to halt these contradictory practices that only serve to entrench Israeli occupation?

5.Canada recently voted for UN Security Council resolution 1322 which called on Israel “to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and its responsibilities under the Forth Geneva Convention”. Before the ink dried on this resolution, Canada reneged on its commitment by abstaining on a further UN resolution calling for the convening of a special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Would your party commit Canada to implement international laws especially the Forth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, as it applies to Israeli practices in the Palestinian occupied territories?

6.Canada, as the chair of Refugee Working Group (RWG), refused to consider UN General Assembly Resolution 194(111) of Dec. 11, 1948 as the basis for solving the Palestinian refugee problem, which is the core of reaching any just peace in the Middle East. Would your government work to implement UN resolutions against Israel with the same vigor and speed shown to implement UN resolutions against Iraq and Yugoslavia, and change the focus of Canada from “resettlement” of the Palestinian refugees to return of the Palestinian people to their homeland?

7.One and half million Iraqis, around half of them children, have been annihilated due to cruel genocidal sanctions. Would your government stop being part of this infamy and call for lifting of all economic sanctions against the Iraqi people?

8.The Arab and the Palestinian-Canadian communities are the subject of racist discrimination by many federal government departments, including Immigration, CSIS and Customs. Many of us have been harassed, intimidated and denied basic human rights and compassion. Would your government instruct all government departments and institutions to stop the racial profiling and racist practices against our communities and take steps to ensure compliance?

Thank you,
Hanna Kawas, Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association