

March 6, 2006

Phil Fontaine,

National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations

Dear Chief Fontaine:

Since we submitted our open letter to you on Feb. 23, 2006, we have received more endorsers to the letter. Due to the large number of organizations in particular that we received in the last week, we feel we are obliged to update you with the complete and final endorsers list.

We were heartened by the response of our indigenous brothers and sisters and their organizations, who identified with the plight of the Palestinian indigenous people.

We were also gratified by the support of our Jewish brothers and sisters and some of their organizations, who opposed the war crimes and atrocities Israel is committing in their name against the people of Palestine.

Awaiting your response,

Hanna Kawas, Chairperson,

Canada Palestine Association [info@cpavancouver.org](mailto:info@cpavancouver.org)

Open letter to the Assembly of First Nations

We are saddened, hurt and shocked by the visit of a delegation of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to Israel, as well as the following statement attributed to AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine:

"Indigenous people in Canada have much in common with the people of Israel, including a respect of the land and their languages. This mission is an excellent opportunity for us to share our values and our traditional ways of life, in the hope of building greater understanding, awareness and respect for our similarities and differences, both at home and abroad". <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=2276>

The victims of genocide at the hands of European settler colonialism cannot and should not give cover for another form of settler colonialism that has committed and continues to commit wholesale ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Palestinian people and nation. In 1948, over four hundred villages and towns were wiped off the Palestinian and world map and their cemeteries desecrated; two thirds of the Palestinian people were uprooted from their historic homeland and forced to live in reservations called refugee camps for the past fifty-eight years, most outside of their historic land. (See "All That Remains" By Prof. Walid Khalidi <http://palestineremembered.com/Acre/Palestine-Remembered/Story661.html> )

Perhaps the chiefs, elders and leaders of the Assembly of First Nations don't know the history of the Zionist movement. In fact, it was coined on the model of the European settler colonialist movement that preceded it four hundred years earlier and committed the genocide against the indigenous peoples. The Zionist movement was also built on the South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Algeria and other European settler colonialist models of the same era - late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Here is what the first Zionist Congress held in Basle, Switzerland (in Europe) in 1897 listed as some of the aims of the movement:

"Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine secured by public law. The congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

The promotion on suitable lines of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers. (our emphasis)"

And Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, wrote in his book *The Jewish State* in 1896:

"We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism." (our emphasis)

So doesn't this logic sound familiar? We are sure that it is painfully familiar to your ancestors and to your people who face racism on a daily basis.

We are sorry that we do not have the means to take you on similar tours to show you what is really happening in Palestine. Perhaps you should ask the hundreds of international volunteers, including Canadians, who paid their own way to go there and bear witness to the continuous Israeli brutality against the indigenous people of Palestine (See <http://www.palsolidarity.org/main/> ). We are sure your Israeli and Zionist hosts will never take you to see the remains of the four hundred villages that were systematically destroyed, nor will they show you the Apartheid wall, the refugee camps, the tens of thousands of uprooted trees nor will they tell you that over 95 per cent of the land that Israel sits on is stolen land from the indigenous Palestinian population. If Chief Fontaine thinks that Israel has respect for the land, he is either unaware or complicit in covering up the massive Israeli injustice against the indigenous people of Palestine.

We will be frank with you. In the name of the vanquished indigenous people, you are being used to justify and cover up not only the Israeli atrocities and war crimes committed against the Palestinian people but also Israeli support for racism and oppression against the peoples of Africa, Asia, central and south America.

This should not pass. The sooner you clarify your position, the sooner you will salvage your name and credibility. Already messages on the Internet are describing your collaboration with the Zionist organizations under the title: "Friends of neocolonialism meet". We hope that you will not be remembered as friends of European settler colonialists who committed genocide against the Palestinian people and were motivated by conquest, greed and superiority, the same evil motivations that enslaved the Native people of the Americas.

It is an offence and a crime against our native brothers and sisters who are still living and to those who perished in the process of colonization, to associate with the crimes of the Israeli settler colonialist state that is committing genocide against the native people of Palestine.

Since the year 2000, over eight hundred Palestinian "Dudley Georges" were murdered every year at the hands of the neo-fascist regime in Israel.

Are these the people who you "have much in common with" and that you want to build cultural comparisons with? Are these the people you want to share your "values and ... traditional ways of life" with?

If so, you are complicit in their war crimes and you should not do it in the name of the First Nations Peoples.

Indigenous peoples must never be a party to genocide against the Palestinian people nor any other oppressed people facing occupation, genocide and theft of their land and natural resources.

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Endorsed by the following groups:

Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Canada

Al-Huda Muslim Society

American Muslims of Puget Sound, Lynnwood, WA, USA

Arab Heritage Centre, Toronto, Ontario

BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Bethlehem, Palestine  
[www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org)

Coalition for a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine, <http://www.coalitiontoronto.com/>

Committee to Defend Palestinian Human Rights (Worcester, MA, USA)

Dana and Qdisiyah Local Community Cooperative, Dana, Tafila, Jordan

Free Palestine Alliance

International Solidarity Movement - Northern California (member of the Justice in Palestine Coalition)

International Solidarity Movement (ISM)-Montreal

International Solidarity Movement (ISM)-Vancouver [www.ism-vancouver.org](http://www.ism-vancouver.org)

International Women's Peace Service, IWPS, [www.iwps.info](http://www.iwps.info)

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign [www.ipsc.ie/](http://www.ipsc.ie/)

Islamic Foundation of Toronto, Scarborough, [www.islamicfoundation.ca](http://www.islamicfoundation.ca)

I-Witness Palestine, Southern California, [www.iwitnesspalestine.org](http://www.iwitnesspalestine.org)

Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation

Justice for Palestinians Committee, Danbury, Connecticut, USA

Justice in Palestine Coalition, San Francisco, CA [www.justiceinpalestine.net](http://www.justiceinpalestine.net)

Land Research Center, Palestine

Middle East Children's Alliance, Berkeley, Ca [www.mecaforpeace.org](http://www.mecaforpeace.org)

Muslim Canadian Congress

New England Committee to Defend Palestine <http://www.onepalestine.org>

Niagara Coalition for Peace <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NC4P/>

Niagara Palestinian Association [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/niag\\_pal\\_news/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/niag_pal_news/)

No One is Illegal-Vancouver <http://noii-van.resist.ca/>

November 16 Coalition (Hamilton, Ontario)

Palestine Community Centre [www.palestinecommunitycentre.com](http://www.palestinecommunitycentre.com)

Palestine House, Toronto [www.palestinehouse.com](http://www.palestinehouse.com)

Palestine Right to Return Committee, York university, Toronto [www.yorku.ca/parc](http://www.yorku.ca/parc)

Palestine Solidarity Group [www.palsolidaritygrp.org](http://www.palsolidaritygrp.org)

Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU) [www.pajumontreal.org](http://www.pajumontreal.org)

Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People, Beit Sahour, Palestine ([www.pcr.ps](http://www.pcr.ps) )

Salaam Vancouver

Simon Fraser University Palestinian Human Rights Committee (PHRC)

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights - McMaster University (Hamilton, ON)

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, Concordia (SPHR)

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, UBC

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights-Montreal

The Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights (BCPR)

The Muslim Services, Toronto, a member group of The Muslim Unity Network in Canada

The University of Waterloo Students for Palestinian Rights

Toronto's Robin Hood Collective

Vancouver Island Network for Disarmament (VIND), Coombs, BC

Vancouver Native Youth Movement, <http://users.resist.ca/~wolvesnotsheep/> email: [nymchapter604@hotmail.com](mailto:nymchapter604@hotmail.com)

Women in Black - Los Angeles

YMCA and the YWCA of Palestine Joint Advocacy Intuitive, Jerusalem

Endorsed by the following alternative media outlets:

Albilad newspaper, London, Ontario

Aljalila Newspaper, Toronto, Ontario

Al-Shorouq Arabic Newspaper, BC

Bulland Awaaz - Vancouver CO-OP Radio [www.cooprado.org](http://www.cooprado.org)

DISCUSSION, Vancouver Co-Op Radio [www.cooprado.org](http://www.cooprado.org)

Goin' Coastal, your Indigenous Revolutionary Radio Program 101.7 fm (CHLY)

Information: Montreal - Palestine [www.imopa.ca](http://www.imopa.ca)

Mostly Water/Resist News Collective, <http://news.resist.ca>

My Two Beads Worth, Native News online <http://mytwobeadsworth.com>

No More Silence Network, a coalition of Native and Non-Native groups and Individuals calling attention to the murder and disappearances of 100s of Native women, [nomoresilence@riseup.net](mailto:nomoresilence@riseup.net) , see [www.missingnativewomen.org](http://www.missingnativewomen.org)

Voice of Palestine, Vancouver [www.voiceofpalestine.ca](http://www.voiceofpalestine.ca)

Wake Up with Co-op!, Vancouver Coop Radio [www.coopradio.org](http://www.coopradio.org)

Endorsed by the following individuals (groups listed for identification only):

Ali Mallah, Equity Vice president, CUPE Toronto District Council

Ali Yassir and B. Bechnak, Montreal

Allan Brison, New Haven, CT

Amber Ohara, No More Silence Network

Amir M. Maasoumi, Président of "Centre de ressources sur la non-violence" (Resources centre for non-violence)

Angie Tibbs, St. John's, NL

Anis BALAFREJ, Association de solidarité Maroc Palestine, Rabat, Morocco

Audrey Huntley, No More Silence Network

Bobby Arbess, Jews for a Just Peace-Victoria

Bruce Katz, Co-President Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU) Montreal

Calvin Woida, Vancouver, BC

Carol Stone, Jews for a Just Peace, Vancouver

Charles Boylan, Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (Vancouver South)

Chiinuks (Ruth) Ogilvie, Member "Goin' Coastal, your Indigenous Revolutionary Radio Program, 101.7 fm CHLY"

Clare Brandabur, Istanbul

Dave Bleakney

Dave Brophy, Friends of Grassy Narrows, Winnipeg

Denis Laplante, Vancouver

Diana Ralph, Toronto, (Jewish member of the Campaign to Stop Secret Trials in Canada)

Donna Petersen, Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (Vancouver Kingsway)

Dorinda Guadalupe Moreno, hitec aztec communications, friends of dqu : elders of 4 colors 4 directions

Dr. Abe Mouaket, P. Eng., Toronto.

Dr. Farid Ayad, Former President of the Canadian Arab Federation, Immediate former President of the Canadian Arab Business Professionals Organization

Dr. Rafeh Hulays, Vice President - Canadian Arab Federation (West)

Dr. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Founding and former director, Indigenous World Association, 1985-2005

Eden Haythornthwaite, Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE), Duncan BC., Canada

Edward C. Corrigan, Barrister & Solicitor, London, Ontario

Ehab Lotayef, Eng., Activist, writer and poet, Montreal

Elizabeth Block, Toronto, a member of Campaign to Stop Secret Trials and Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation

Elsie W Dean, Human Rights for Women Elders, Burnaby, BC

Family of Reem Abu-Sbaih, Ayman and Yousef Helo, NYC

Freda Guttman, International Solidarity Movement-Montreal

FreeXero [www.FREEXERO.com](http://www.FREEXERO.com)

Gale Courey Toensing, Falls Village, CT

George N. Rishmawi - Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People ([www.pcr.ps](http://www.pcr.ps))

Greg Felton, [www.gregfelton.com](http://www.gregfelton.com)

Greta Berlin, Los Angeles, Volunteer, International Solidarity Movement

Hanny Hassan, London, ON

Harry Berbrayer, Duncan, B.C.

Helen Michell, spokesperson for the Bear Clan families of Maxan Lake

Ibrahim Hayani, (Professor of Economics, Toronto)

Ingmar Lee, Freelance Writer and Forest Protection Activist [www.ingmarlee.com](http://www.ingmarlee.com) , Pondicherry, India

Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab, Saudi Arabia



Ismail Zayid, Canada Palestine Association, Halifax

James M. Craven/Blackfoot Name: Omahkohkiaayo i'poyi, Professor and Department Head, Economics; Chairman, Business Division, Clark College, Vancouver, WA., Member, Blackfoot Nation

Jayce Salloum, Filmmaker, Vancouver

Jeanne Svhiyeyi Aga Chadwick, Publisher/Editor, My Two Beads Worth, Native News online  
<http://mytwobeadsworth.com>

Jeff Siddiqui, Associate Broker, Seattle, WA

Jerome Charaoui, student organizer, Montreal QC

Jessica Peart, Vancouver, Coast Salish Territory

John and Betty Beeching, Vancouver

John Pranger, Vancouver, BC

Johnny Roberts, St. Catharines, Ontario

Joseph Backus, Kingston, ON.

Joseph Schechla, coordinator, Housing and Land Rights Network, Habitat International Coalition, Giza, Egypt [www.hlrn.org](http://www.hlrn.org) , [www.hic-mena.org](http://www.hic-mena.org)

Judith Weisman

June L. Lorenzo, Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico, USA

Justine McCabe, International Committee, Green Party of the US

Karin Brothers, Toronto, Ont.

Kathryn Furlong, Vancouver, BC

Khaled Mouammar, former CAF president, Toronto

khalid Khawaldeh, Dana, Tafila, Jordan

Krista Johnston, No More Silence Network

Lamis Jamal Deek, Native of Palestine, Daughter of exiles, Attorney with Al-Awda, Palestine Right to Return Coalition

Larry Wartel, Jews for a Just Peace, Victoria BC

Lawrence Boxall, Jews for a Just Peace - Vancouver

Lawrence ytzhak braithwaite, author, victoria, british columbia

Macdonald Stainsby, Vancouver

Marc Azar, Montréal, Québec

Martin O'Brien, Martley, Worcester, Worcs. UK

Marty and Martha Roth, Jews for a Just Peace, Vancouver

Mary Hughes-Thompson, Los Angeles, Volunteer International Solidarity Movement

Meria, Producer/Host, "THE MERIA HELLER SHOW"

Mira Khazzam, Montreal, Quebec

Mitzi Brown

Mohamed Kamel, Freelance writer, Montreal

Mohammed Abu Assi, Montreal

Mohammed Shokr, Muslim Unity Group

Nathan Stuckey

Nazih Mroue, London, Ont.

Nick Treanor, St.Catharines, Ontario

Nicolas A. Sayegh, Montreal

Nizar Sakhnini, Mississauga, Ontario

Noah Lepawsky. ISM Volunteer, Vancouver

Orion Carrier, Engineering Student, Victoria, BC

Peter Eglin, Professor of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

Rebeka Tabobondung, Wasauksing First Nation

Rezeq Faraj, co-president of PAJU (Palestinian and Jewish Unity)

Riaz Ahmed Behra, Vancouver, B.C.

Robert Bibeau, PAJU

Robert Massoud, Ont.

Robyn Bourgeois, No More Silence Network

Ron Benner, London, Ontario

Samia A. Halaby, born in Jerusalem and living in exile in New York

Sandra Joy Jones, Wilmington, De.

Shawn Smith, Ottawa

Sid Shniad, Vancouver, British Columbia

Smadar Carmon, Israeli Jew, Toronto, Coalition for Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

Splitting the Sky, Indigenous activist

Sue Goldstein, Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation of Palestine

Suliman Zabian, London, ont.

Tammie Tupechka

Teresa Gagne, Vancouver, BC

Tony Ali, Vancouver

Waldemar Belczowski, Independent Media Production

Zainab Amadahy, Indigenous Activist