United for Peace – Canadian Interfaith Coalition
Equality, Human Dignity, and Freedom for All.
www.unitedforpeace.ca

Re: The Government of Canada's Characterization of Anti-Zionism in its National Commitments to Combat Antisemitism

October 19, 2026

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Canadian Members of Parliament,

We are writing on behalf of United for Peace – Canadian Interfaith Coalition, together with diverse Canadian organizations, to express our deep concern regarding the Government of Canada's Summer 2026 Progress Report on the National Commitments to Combat Antisemitism, which states that antisemitism "includes Anti-Zionism."

We strongly urge the Government to reconsider this formulation. Antisemitism is hatred, prejudice, discrimination, or violence against Jews because they are Jewish. Anti-Zionism, by contrast, is opposition to Zionism as a political or ideological movement. The two should not be treated as synonymous. Anti-Zionism is not part of antisemitism, and it should not be considered in this manner by the Canadian government.

People oppose Zionism for political, historical, religious, ethical, or human-rights reasons without hostility toward Jews, Judaism, or Jewish communities. Importantly, there is also a longstanding tradition of Jewish opposition to Zionism, including Jewish voices advocating for Palestinian rights, equality, and justice. Defining anti-Zionism itself as antisemitic contradicts the thoughtful, well-informed, conscientious position of many Jews as well as many other Canadians, none of whom are antisemites.

Anti-Zionism is not a threat to the safety of Jewish Canadian individuals or communities. Anti-Zionism is opposition to a political order maintained through the dispossession, apartheid, denial of return, denial of self-determination, and genocidal violence against Palestinians. We unequivocally support strong measures to combat antisemitism in Canada. Jewish Canadians must be protected from hatred, discrimination, harassment, and violence as all Canadians deserve. At the same time, Canadians must be free to express their opposition to Zionism, which is a political ideology to which many Canadians

legitimately object. That is not antisemitism. Our government should not succumb to forces in our society who wish to suppress a legitimate political and moral position by declaring it to be antisemitic, which it is not. Broadly equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism chills legitimate discussion of Israel, Palestine, Zionism, and Palestinian rights, while potentially contributing to anti-Palestinian racism and further polarization within Canadian society. We therefore respectfully call upon the Government of Canada to:

1. Revoke its characterization of anti-Zionism as antisemitism;
2. Recognize the diversity of Jewish perspectives, including Jewish opposition to Zionism;
3. Protect freedom of expression and academic freedom, including legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism; and
4. Combat both antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism without conflating hatred of Jews with political opposition to Zionism.

Canada should be a place where Jewish Canadians are protected from antisemitism and where Palestinians and all Canadians can speak openly about human rights, justice, Israel, Palestine, and Zionism without fear of being unfairly characterized or silenced. We urge the Government to reconsider the language in its progress report and provide clear guidance distinguishing anti-Jewish hatred from legitimate political and ideological expression.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

The undersigned national human rights, civil society and interfaith organizations:
United for Peace – Canadian Interfaith Coalition
Canadian Friends of Sabeel
Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need (CSRDN)
Catholics for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land
The Coalition to End the Genocide in Gaza
Independent Jewish Voices
Justice for All Canada
KAIROS Canada
Mennonite Church Canada Palestine/Israel Network
The United Church of Canada
United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel (UNJPPI)

The undersigned local and regional human rights, civil society and interfaith organizations:
Canadian Muslims for Palestine
Durham Muslim Alliance
Faculty for Palestine, Trent University
Mennonite Church Manitoba Palestine Israel Network
Muslim Council of Calgary
Saskatoon Chapter of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East