

November 29, 2021

Dear Minister Joly,

Greetings from Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCC). We offer our congratulations to you for your recent appointment to Minister of Foreign Affairs. We look forward to connecting with you in this new role.

Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist Christian churches that shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC began just over 100 years ago, in 1920, and today we work with local partners in over 45 countries working on relief, development and peace.

MCC partners often reach out to our offices in Canada with specific concerns within their contexts. MCC is deeply concerned by the Israeli government designation on October 19, 2021, of six Palestinian human rights and civil society organization as "terrorist organizations." For over 70 years, MCC has partnered with Christian, Jewish and Muslim organizations in Palestine and Israel, in the West Bank, Gaza, occupied East Jerusalem and Israel proper, who are committed to nonviolence in the pursuit of a just peace for all in the region.

For years, Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights and humanitarian organizations, including MCC partner organizations, have faced an increasingly difficult operating environment, extreme scrutiny, and a shrinking civic space. This recent targeted designation by the Israeli government further impacts the ability of civil society organizations to carry out their essential work. While this incident is specific to Palestine and Israel, many MCC partners and organizations globally face similar limits on their work.

One organization recently designated as a "terrorist organization" is Defence for Children International Palestine (DCIP), an independent, Palestinian child rights and protection organization operating in the West Bank, occupied East Jerusalem, and Gaza. For 30 years DCIP has investigated, documented, and exposed grave human rights violations against Palestinian children.

For over 5 years, MCC Canada has worked closely with DCIP, particularly on DCIP's No Way to Treat a Child (NWTAC) campaign. NWTAC raises awareness of the arrest, detaining and allegations of torture of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention facilities. MCC Canada has participated in joint events, signed letters and endorsed DCIP research and campaigns. MCC continues to stand with DCIP and disagrees vigorously with the Israeli government's terrorist designation for DCIP even as we remain firm in our resolve that all peoples in the region enjoy a just peace.

MCC is concerned that this designation of "terrorist organization" will delegitimize and eliminate the work of DCIP and further limit the work of other local NGOs involved in human rights protections, humanitarian support and peacebuilding. The work of organizations like DCIP and MCC partners is essential to care for the most vulnerable, including children, and contributes to the work of building a just peace for all in the region. In addition, MCC is deeply concerned with shrinking civic spaces globally, impacting partners who work on relief, development, and peace.

In following the lead of [several MCC partners in Palestine and Israel, we](#) ask the Canadian government to use its leverage, relationship and connections to:

- Work with the Government of Israel to reverse these designations of “terrorism”
- Refrain, at all costs, from applying these designations in Canada
- Speak out against shrinking civic spaces and crackdowns on local NGOs wherever they exist around the world and actively work to support local organizations and promote the work of civil society globally.

Thank you for your consideration on this urgent matter, and many blessings to you as you take on this role. You will remain in our prayers as you provide leadership on complex global contexts such as these.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Bauman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Cober Bauman  
Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee Canada