

April 22, 2022

The Honourable Minister Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca
Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca

RE: Ecumenical letter urging Canada to protect Freedom of Worship, and access for all religions to places of worship in occupied East Jerusalem, and to condemn recent Israeli police attacks on worshippers at Al Aqsa Mosque

Dear Minister Joly:

Greetings. We hope this finds you and your colleagues well in this difficult time, with war and violations of human rights and dignity on the rise around the world.

We represent Christian denominations, church agencies, and ecumenical organizations in Canada who work with Palestinian and Israeli partners towards a just and lasting peace. Our concerns are based on our long-term engagement in the region, our many church-to-church partnerships, and our longstanding relationships with both Palestinians and Israelis working for peace.

We write today calling on you to take urgent action immediately to protect the rights of Palestinian Christians and Muslims to fully access places of worship in occupied East Jerusalem. As Christians, we amplify [the message of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem](#) for Easter 2022 on April 24th, stating that “there is no justification for these additional unjust restrictions, and affirms its explicit, clear and complete rejection of all restrictions.” This position of all Jerusalem Heads of Churches has global, ecumenical support, as stated by [the World Council of Churches](#). Freedom of Worship is a human right, and ensuring unimpeded access to places of worship is a duty of every government.

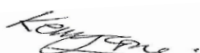
We urge Canada to take a strong, moral stand, based on the commitment to rule of law and respect for the right to Freedom of Worship, to call on the Government of Israel to ensure just access for all to Jerusalem and places of worship, and to preserve the Status Quo regarding Jerusalem.

Grace and peace to you in the important leadership you give.

Sincerely,



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate
The Anglican Church of Canada



Kerry Grier, Peace Program Officer
Canadian Friends Service Committee



Rev. Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



Aisha Francis, Executive Director
KAيروس: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives



The Rev. Daniel Scott,
Moderator of the General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Rick Cober Bauman, Executive Director
Mennonite Central Committee Canada



Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary,
The United Church of Canada

C.c.:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister
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