

Nanaimo-Ladysmith

May 7, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada Office of the Prime Minister 80 Wellington St. Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are writing to you today to express our deep concerns about recent reports that the new Israeli coalition government intends to annex significant parts of the West Bank Palestinian territories, occupied by Israel since 1967. Such a move will represent one of the single most extreme unilateral moves Israel will have made in the many decades long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Acquisition of land through war is strictly and unequivocally prohibited by international law. This annexation plan would go against UN Security Council resolution 242 of November 1967, which is one of the most widely affirmed resolutions in the history of Arab-Israeli conflict. Resolution 242 refers in its preamble to the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in which every State in the area can live in security."

An annexation of Palestinian lands, in the midst of the global COVID-19 crisis, would not only violate UNSC 242, but several other resolutions as well. It would also end all hopes for a two

Ottawa.

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state solution to the decades long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. You have affirmed your belief in the two state solution many times, including in December of last year during the lighting of the menorah on Parliament Hill.

Amongst the lands being discussed as part of the annexation plan, are occupied lands in the Jordan River Valley. Taking such reckless action would threaten Israel's quarter century old peace agreement with Jordan. It would undermine the stability of the government of Jordan's King Abdullah II, who is already under intense internal political pressures. Weakening the Jordanian government and ending Jordan's peace with Israel would further destabilize the entire Middle East region.

The UN's special rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Canadian Prof. Michel Lynk, is on the record as saying that annexation would lead to a "cascade of bad human rights consequences." Lynk further said that it would lead to the demise of the Palestinians' rights to self determination.

During your July 2016 visit to Ukraine you rightly condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea and its failure to abide by the Minsk Accord. Two years earlier, in 2014, Canada took strong actions in response to the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea with the imposition of sanctions.

Under your leadership, Canada must apply the same principles to any notion of an Israeli annexation of Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has shown time and again that he is willing to ignore international law when it comes to the rights of the Palestinian people. The attempt by the Netanyahu government to take this action while the world is busy dealing with an unprecedented global public health crisis is reprehensible. Canada must not stand idly by and allow Israel to violate international law with impunity.

We call on you to bring this matter up with the utmost urgency with Canada's international partners, and to apply pressure on Israel to back down from this dangerous plan. If strong words by international leaders prove insufficient to convince Israel to abide by international law, then tougher measures such as sanctions might be called for.

Yours,

Paul Manly

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The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P. Minister of Foreign Affairs