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December 14, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

RE: Please appoint a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the treatment of Palestinian children

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

Greetings to you from The United Church of Canada.

In this special season of Advent, as Christians wait in hope for the promise of God with us, we also reflect on the gift and vulnerability of children, helpless in the face of political powers and decisions that affect their lives. It is in this spirit that I write to you, as a parent and a person deeply concerned about the wellbeing of Palestinian children living under decades of Israeli military occupation.

On December 4, 2020, [Ali Abu Alia, a Palestinian child, was shot and killed](#) by an Israeli soldier in his hometown of Al-Mughayir in the occupied West Bank. Ali had just turned 15 years old on that very day. Before he could enjoy the special birthday dinner his mother had prepared, Ali died after being shot in the abdomen by an Israeli soldier.

Tragically, Ali's death is not an isolated incident. Although his death had yet to become another statistic, Defence for Children International-Palestine (DCIPS is a United Church human rights partner) records that as of 30 September 2020, as many as [7 Palestinian children](#) had been killed in this year alone, the results of Israeli military and illegal settler action. However, each one of these children was a living person, precious to their grieving families. Each child was entitled to the protections guaranteed under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and under the Fourth Geneva Convention, treaties to which both Israel and Canada are high contracting signatories with obligations to uphold.

The United Church has urged the government to take all measures possible to urge the Israeli government to end its occupation, which is the main obstacle to peace and a primary factor in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians, including children. Canadians have phoned, written numerous letters, visited with members of Parliament, and petitioned the Government of Canada to appoint a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the situation of Palestinian children held in Israeli military detention. As recently demonstrated, it is evident that the government can very quickly appoint a Special Envoy to monitor and report on issues deemed of high importance. By appointing a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the situation of Palestinian children, Canadians are seeking assurance that our government shares our belief that the wellbeing of children, including Palestinian children, is of the utmost importance.

On November 20th, Petition E-2667 signed by over 2,400 Canadians was presented in the House of Commons by Nanaimo-Ladysmith MP Paul Manly, calling upon “*the **Government of Canada** to ensure the human rights of Palestinian children are protected by instructing a Special Envoy to promote, monitor and report on the human rights situation of Palestinian children living in the occupied Palestinian Territory and Gaza.*” This petition follows on the many visits and letters to elected officials with the same request over the years.

We urge the government to respond quickly to this request so that no more Palestinian children become names on the growing list of fatal statistics.

We look forward to your favourable response, as we prepare to commemorate the birth the Christ-child who embodied the promise of God’s peace.

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

Sincerely,



The Right Rev. Richard Bott
Moderator/Modérateur
The United Church of Canada/L’Église Unie du Canada

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