

**STOP THE WALL CAMPAIGN**



الحملة الشعبية الفلسطينية  
جدار الفصل العنصري لمقاومة

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Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign  
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## **The Grass-Roots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign Expresses Solidarity with Indigenous Political Prisoners incarcerated by Canadian Government**

The Grass-Roots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign wishes to express its solidarity with and call for the immediate and unconditional release of indigenous political prisoners Chief Donny Morris, Deputy Chief Jack McKay, Head Councilor Cecilia Begg, councilors Sam McKay and Darryl Sainnawap and council employee Bruce Sakakeep from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) and spokesperson Bob Lovelace from the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (AAFN).

The Grass-Roots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign understands that these arrests come on the heels of the Canadian government's recent decision to boycott the Durban II conference on racism in 2009. This Canadian boycott is ostensibly being undertaken as a protest against the UN's decision to examine the apartheid character of Israeli state practices. However, we also know that Canada's boycott is also be motivated by official Ottawa's desire to avoid scrutiny for its own shameful record of colonialism and genocide at home, including its recent refusal to sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Palestinians will not forget how former Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Matthew Coon Come was replaced for openly speaking out against the apartheid reality that faces indigenous communities in Canada during the 2001 UN Anti-Racism Conference in Durban, South Africa. As a result, Palestinians are increasingly beginning to understand that Canada's growing support for Israel, the only remaining settler-colonial entity in the Middle East, is dictated by Canada's own settler colonial past. Most recently this identity of interests was confirmed this past March when Canada's Public Safety Minister, Stockwell Day, and Israel's Minister of Public Security, Avi Dichter, announced a 'security' agreement to increase cooperation between the two states.

Such 'agreements' are most likely to facilitate the increasing criminalization of our communities on both Turtle Island and in Palestine. The similarities between the recent wave of arrests targeting elected leaders in indigenous communities on Turtle Island and the situation that the elected leadership of the Palestinian people faces is worth noting in this context. Just as elected indigenous leaders have become political prisoners in Ontario, over 40 elected Palestinian parliamentarians are currently being held in Israeli prisons for refusing to sign-away their traditional lands. Such politically motivated arrests and detentions are meant to crush the on-going will of our peoples to resist corporate and military colonization of our lands.

The targeting of our elected leaders is the latest stage of a systematic campaign that portrays our very presence in our traditional lands as a security threat. This is most often expressed in racist hysteria that links 'demographics' to national security issues, the lower life-expectancy rates of our people, the underfunding of our communities, the blocking of educational opportunities for our youth, and the disproportionate representation of our people in the colonizers prisons. In such a racist climate it is our youth which are made to bear the heaviest burden of colonial policies that deny their existence on a daily basis. Along these lines, recent statements by Canadian politicians like Senator Romeo Dallaire that link of 'demographic growth' in indigenous communities to 'national security' issues echoes the constant stream of such racist insinuations coming from Israeli politicians.

Whether it is the mineral resources found on Turtle Island, or the oil wealth and strategic location of the Middle East - a renewed assault is being launched on our communities under the rapacious logics of neoliberal globalization. It is in the continuing struggle for our lands, dignity, sovereignty and self-determination that the Palestinian people are linked to other indigenous peoples struggling against settler-colonial racism. It is only by continuing to weave together networks of solidarity amongst indigenous peoples bravely resisting the current assault on our planet that we can reclaim a bright future for our children and future generations.

In solidarity,

Jamal Juma',

Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, coordinator