



Canadian Arab Federation
La Fédération Canado-Arabe

NEWS RELEASE

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Abandonment of anti-racism conference a blow to tolerance and multiculturalism in Canada

Toronto - CAF would like to add its voice to other anti-racism organizations such as the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada in decrying Canada's boycott of and refusal to support a UN anti-racism conference planned in Durban, South Africa, next year.

Canada's outright rejection of the conference sends a clear message to the Canadian public that the current government is disinterested in promoting human rights and anti-racism. The very fact that Israel was "attacked" at the previous conference indicates that the international community and human rights organizations are in agreement that the occupation of Arab lands, the mistreatment and killing of Palestinians, and the denial of the right of Palestinian refugees to return is in violation of international law and will be condemned and no longer accepted.

Respected human rights advocates and Nobel Peace prize winners such as Reverend Desmond Tutu and former US President Jimmy Carter are amongst human rights defenders who have on many occasions asserted that peace cannot exist in situations of occupation, and that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories amounts to nothing less than apartheid, thereby indicating one group's legal relationship of superiority over another. Former Special Rapporteur for United Nations Commission on Human Rights, John Dugard, has also publicly stated that Israel openly practices an apartheid regime and engages in war crimes.

"We would also like to remind Jason Kenney that he is a Minister of the Canadian government, not the racist Israeli government; still, CAF is not surprised with Minister Kenney's position given his outright contempt for the Arab and Muslim communities in Canada and his condoning of Islamophobia. This is the same man who attacked a Muslim organization for lodging a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission against Maclean's Magazine for publishing an inflammatory and bigoted article, and who slandered Canadian NGO's at an OSCE Conference in front of the international community", said Khaled Mouammar, CAF National President.

"It is ironic that the Canadian government is so outspoken about shunning the conference due to the fear of hearing criticisms against the Israeli occupation, given its own past with hate and bigotry. For over 200 years, the African people were subjugated to a life of slavery in North America, Chinese immigrants were subjected to a head tax and the First Nations were ethnically cleansed. The latter still live in absolutely appalling conditions exasperated by government indifference. The government has refused to sign an international treaty recognizing the inherent rights of indigenous people and by refusing to participate at Durban, Canada again has insulted and turned its back to the First Nations", stated Mohamed Boudjenane, CAF Executive Director.

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