

Trudeau government backs Israel as it prepares to launch next stage of Gaza genocide

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A flurry of diplomatic activity over the past 10 days has made clear that the trade union-backed Liberal government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fully endorses the far-right Israeli government's looming onslaught on Rafah. A series of meetings involving Trudeau and Foreign Minister Melanie Jolie followed statements by the Biden administration in the United States that gave the Netanyahu regime the green light to proceed with the next stage of its genocide against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

On Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he had approved an assault on Rafah, the southern city where more than 1.4 million refugees are crammed together after the decimation of the rest of the narrow strip by US-supplied bombs.

One week earlier, on March 8, Trudeau held a discussion with Israeli War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz in which the two reviewed the war plans for Gaza as well as growing tensions in the West Bank. According to a readout, the pair demanded the "immediate release of all remaining hostages and called on the international community to continue applying pressure to secure their release." In other words, in the name of "applying pressure" to free the hostages, the "international community" should continue supplying Israel with the means to pummel Gaza from the air, sea, and land.

Trudeau followed up this pro-war, pro-genocide declaration with an insincere plea to the warmonger Gantz, who has threatened to turn southern Lebanon into a wasteland like Gaza, to allow humanitarian aid to reach civilians. He also raised "concern" for civilians in Rafah. Such supposed concern for civilians is merely for optics, as Trudeau's government has faced sustained protests from workers and youth opposed to the genocide.

Prior to his talk with Trudeau, Gantz was in Washington

D.C., for consultations with Vice President Kamala Harris, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Antony Blinken on how best to proceed with the assault.

Meanwhile, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mélanie Joly was on a week-long swing from March 6-13 through the Middle East for discussions on the war and what her office described as "pathways towards sustainable peace." Joly met with her counterparts in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates before heading to Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank, in what Politico described as her "mystery tour," as she did not make any public remarks. Few details have emerged of the content of the discussions.

It is evident that clearing the way for Israel's escalation of the Gaza genocide was the main agenda item.

According to a readout on her March 10 meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz, Joly upheld Israel's "right to defend itself" after the deaths of well over 30,000 Palestinian civilians over the preceding five months. At the same time, she appealed for more aid to be allowed into Gaza through land crossings and a maritime port which is being built just off the coast by the United States. The statement reiterated that Joly "reaffirmed Canada's commitment to the security of Israel and to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East through a two-state solution."

On March 11, Joly announced on Twitter/X that Canada would provide \$1 million to support the purported victims of sexual violence in Hamas' October 7 attack, a cynical allegation deployed by the Israeli government and aligned groups to whip up support for the genocide among the identity politics-obsessed middle class in the imperialist centres. Joly also offered the support of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in investigating

Hamas' alleged crimes.

On Thursday, March 14, Joly shook hands with Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas. Israel and its imperialist backers in the United States and Canada hope to prop up the unpopular Abbas and the PA to serve as the overseers of whatever remains of Gaza in the aftermath of the current assault.

The Trudeau government and its New Democratic Party (NDP) allies have fully endorsed the genocide since its launch in October. This has included repeated declarations of support for Israel's "right" to massacre defenceless men, women and children, the denial of help to desperate Palestinians seeking to bring their family members in Gaza to Canada, and vicious smear campaigns against opponents of the Gaza genocide. In January, Trudeau denounced the International Court of Justice case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza filed by South Africa.

In February, information released by Global Affairs Canada, the country's foreign ministry, to *The Maple*, revealed that the Trudeau government approved export permits for \$28.5 million of military aid to Israel during the first two months of its onslaught on Gaza. The figure was more than the annual record registered over the past 30 years for Canadian military exports to Israel of \$26 million in 2021.

Canadian imperialism has a long record of supporting the Zionist regime as it has expanded illegal settlements on Palestinian territory and maintained an apartheid regime and military occupation to repress the Palestinian people. Ottawa has repeatedly voted together with the US against UN resolutions condemning Israel's violations of international law and war crimes. When then US President Donald Trump provocatively recognized the divided city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Trudeau refused to condemn the action, thereby giving it his government's tacit approval.

Several media outlets reported late last week that Ottawa is "slow-walking" a recent request from Israel for several dozen armoured vehicles and "non-lethal aid," including night vision goggles, over humanitarian concerns.

The *Toronto Star* and CBC reported on the basis of anonymous sources that export permits for non-lethal aid to Israel have been blocked for two months. However, a Global Affairs Canada statement asserted that permits continued to be reviewed "on a case by case basis."

The conflicting information comes after a case in federal court was filed earlier this month by pro-

Palestinian activists and lawyers demanding a ban on all non-lethal aid to Israel. Canada has repeatedly been accused of concealing arms shipments and exports of military equipment with vaguely worded permits that make it almost impossible to identify what the government has approved for export.

The NDP has also associated itself with the demand for the Trudeau government to ban weapons exports to Israel. As foreign affairs spokesperson Heather McPherson stated Thursday, "With over 30,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, the minister is obliged to refuse export permits for military equipment and technology where there is a substantial risk of human rights violations, like we are seeing with Netanyahu's horrendous bombardments and ground offensive."

This is hot air aimed at disorienting politically inexperienced forces who have participated in the months-long protests against the genocide across Canada. McPherson's party ensures that the minority Liberal government has a majority in parliament and can remain in power. It has not batted an eyelid during Canada's staunch support for the far-right Netanyahu regime over the years. Since Israel's murderous onslaught began, the NDP has been at the forefront of intimidating opponents of genocide, including those in its own ranks. Sarah Jama, a member of the Ontario legislature, was thrown out of the party's legislative caucus after declaring her solidarity with the Palestinians and describing Israel as an "apartheid state," a designation supported by the United Nations and countless aid organizations.

The NDP and McPherson in particular have also played a major part in the resurgence of Canadian militarism over recent years. McPherson has emerged as one of the NDP's leading figures supporting the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, including by championing Canadian military exports. Her party also backed a motion, introduced by the hard-right Conservatives in the house of Commons in 2021, condemning China for "genocide" against its Uyghur minority based on fabricated evidence produced by exile groups with ties to the US State Department.



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