



# Brendan Hanley

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Many of you have written to me welcoming the Joint Statement released December 12<sup>th</sup> by our Prime Minister, in conjunction with Australia and New Zealand. On the same day, Canada voted in support of a resolution at the UN General Assembly that demanded an “immediate humanitarian ceasefire.”

As we witness the ongoing destruction of so many innocent lives in Palestine, I join the call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. I also support all elements of the joint statement. Indeed, every sentence in that statement is important and should be read. Canada’s evolving position reflects the appalling death toll and destruction that we continue to see in Gaza, without a clear end in sight.

I would like you to know that your voices have been heard—whatever your position—and have been included in the conversations that led to Canada’s vote at the UN and to the current statement. Throughout the past several weeks I have been incorporating your views while speaking with colleagues in caucus, and in conversations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, her Parliamentary Secretary, and the Prime Minister.

Canada’s initial efforts following Israel’s response to the October 7<sup>th</sup> terror attack were intended to push for a pause that would allow humanitarian aid to get into Gaza, Canadians to get out and the hostages to be released. The pause, while successful to a degree, was sadly short-lived. The violence since the pause ended is unacceptable and must cease. The daily suffering in Gaza is unbearable to watch. I have wept along with many of you as we see, almost before our eyes, children, babies, parents, or grandparents killed or injured at an excruciating rate. While we witness the mounting loss of lives and families, homes, and essential infrastructure, we still learning the extent of the shocking violence, including sexual violence, perpetrated by Hamas on October 7<sup>th</sup>— a day that Israelis and Jews everywhere will never forget.

While I have always advocated an end to the violence, there is now a clear need to change our approach. As written in the joint statement, the price of defeating Hamas cannot be the continuous suffering of all Palestinian citizens. Many UN agencies have stated, and I agree, that what is happening in Gaza is nothing short of a humanitarian catastrophe. A ceasefire is therefore essential. Israel and Hamas must both lay down their arms, and the hostages must be released. All illegal forms of war, whether laying siege, or holding hostages, must stop.

Meanwhile, at home and around the world, we must continue to do our part to combat antisemitism, islamophobia, and anti-Arab sentiment. The trauma that has been inflicted on each of our Jewish, Palestinian, and Muslim communities cannot be overstated. As we have shown so well in the Yukon, our conversations and our actions must continue to occur in the name of peace.

To get to a lasting peace, the horrors of terrorism, violence directed against innocent civilian populations, and war must be rightly condemned, and those who violate international law must face accountability for their actions. For peace to take hold, Canada must work in urgent collaboration with our international partners, support international institutions in upholding the rule of law, and commit to working to alleviate this humanitarian crisis. To be a true ally to our friends, we must be willing to tell them hard truths.

This is the approach I will be pushing for Canada to support, both as I join the calls for a ceasefire in this conflict, and as we look to continue engaging constructively around the world on the difficult but necessary path towards a durable two state solution.