



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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December 20, 2017

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I write to express appreciation for your recent statement confirming that Canada's Embassy in Israel will remain in Tel Aviv, and will not be moved to Jerusalem. This position is supported by Canadians who value respect for international law, and deeply desire a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

In 2009, the ELCIC adopted a convention *Resolution on Peace in the Holy Land*, expressing our church's support "the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel" (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Policy); and our support for a secure state of Israel and a viable state for Palestinians, including a contiguous West Bank. In this resolution, our church also committed to praying for peace and to accompanying peace builders. <http://elcic.ca/Public-Policy/documents/600.52009-ELCICResolutiononPeaceintheHolyLand.pdf>

We are grateful for this reiteration of Canada's policy related to the status of Jerusalem. It affirms that three faiths—Jews, Christians and Muslims, and two peoples—Palestinians and Israelis—all have special and unique relationships and historical connections to the city in their own right. ELCIC partners in Israel and Palestine have shared their deep concern that President Trump's declaration is further evidence of U.S. bias, discounting any perceptions that the United States has or could play a role as "honest broker" for a just resolution to the conflict in the Holy Land.

The international community does not recognize Israel's claim to all of Jerusalem, the status of which is to be decided through just and fair negotiations.

The ELCIC supports the Government of Canada's call for a just and negotiated resolution to the special status of Jerusalem, and urges you and Minister Freeland to provide courageous leadership in this critical global issue. Palestinian, Israeli, and U.S. partners of the ELCIC press for the current status quo arrangements in Jerusalem to remain until just negotiations resolve its status. Unilaterally endorsing Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, which is considered occupied territory under international law, does not advance the possibility of a just and peaceful resolution.

Prime Minister, we ask that Canada refrain from issuing any statements which might prejudice this status quo or any future negotiations on the status of Jerusalem. The ELCIC and partners in the region would welcome and support actions by your government to implement obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and take the lead in international and regional diplomatic efforts and support aimed at achieving, without delay, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Be assured of my personal prayers for you in the important leadership you give for all Canadians.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name 'Susan C. Johnson' in a cursive script.

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson  
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Cc: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honourable Erin O'Toole, Foreign Affairs Critic, Conservative Party of Canada  
Hélène Laverdière, Foreign Affairs Critic, New Democratic Party  
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada  
Martine Ouellet, Leader, Bloc Québécois  
ELCIC National Church Council