



FEDERAL ELECTION TASK FORCE 2008

Issues of Concern and Recommendations for Action





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B'nai Brith Canada is the Jewish community's foremost human rights agency, operating in this country since 1875. Its team of dedicated volunteers and professional staff is engaged in combating antisemitism, bigotry and racism in Canada and abroad. Its wide-ranging educational and social programming, charitable work and human rights initiatives, demonstrate its commitment to the principle of "People Helping People".

B'nai Brith Canada is the Jewish community's only independent, self-funded, national organization. Its popular-based grassroots support consists of thousands of Canadian families with diverse backgrounds and interests, empowering the organization to speak on their behalf on key issues of concern to the Jewish community.

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ISSUES OF CONCERN

When it comes to questions of public policy, the Canadian Jewish community is not monolithic. Its members have affiliations with each of the three major national political parties, as well as with the Bloc Quebecois and the Green Party, and many are active in the political life of their communities. This reflects the diversity of opinion within the Jewish community as to how society as a whole should address the pressing issues of the day. However, there are a number of areas that are of crucial concern to the Jewish community as a whole. This Election Task Force Guide focuses on just some of these key issues, highlighting areas that are under federal jurisdiction. However, the organization is also mindful that federal policy plays an important role in many provincial and municipal initiatives as well, in such fields as immigration, housing, education, the provision of health services, and social services to at-risk groups. We encourage close collaboration between the federal and provincial sectors in all these areas in order to maximize the benefits of federal directives, taxation revenue and government transfers.

1. DOMESTIC ISSUES

i) Hate-Related Activity in Canada

The most recent *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* prepared by the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada reported that there were 1,042 antisemitic incidents in 2007, the highest figure ever recorded in the history of the *Audit* and an increase of 11.4% from 2006. A five-year review shows that the number of antisemitic incidents have almost doubled since 2003, when 584 incidents were reported. A 10-year perspective indicates that incidents have jumped more than four-fold since 1998 when there were 240 cases. For more details on the regional breakdown of incidents go to <http://bnaibrith.ca/publications/audit2007/audit2007.pdf>.

The 1,042 incidents across Canada were in the following categories: 699 cases of harassment (67.1%), 315 of vandalism (30.2%) and 28 of violence (2.7%). As in previous years, harassment continues to comprise the majority of cases. 132 incidents targeted Jews in their own homes, compared to 118 in 2006; 82 cases took place in school settings, up from 54 in 2006. Among the disturbing trends that emerge from this collection of data is the ongoing cloaking of antisemitism in the form of anti-Zionist rhetoric on campus, where increased activity overall was noted. Also noted was a pattern of retaliation against those who dared to speak out against racism, and the entrenchment of intolerant attitudes directed at ethnic and religious minorities seeking reasonable accommodation of their religious and cultural needs.

Recommendations:

- 1) **All the major police forces in Canada should have dedicated hate crime units.**
- 2) **Legislation to prohibit the publication of hate speech should be strengthened.**
- 3) **The *Criminal Code* should be amended to include Holocaust denial as a hate crime.**

- 4) **The hate crime provision now limited to “religious institutions” should be expanded to include educational and community facilities belonging to religious communities.**
- 5) **Hate groups should be banned in accordance with Canada’s international obligations, as well as symbols used to advance a racist agenda.**

ii) Need for Increased Security at Jewish Institutions

Post 9/11, Jewish institutions in Canada – synagogues, community centres, office buildings, schools and seniors’ homes – have increasingly been the target of vandalism, desecration and hate propaganda, as well as threats of violence.

The League’s 2007 *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* documented 22 incidents involving synagogues in 2007 alone. Targeted houses of worship included synagogues in Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Richmond (BC), Hamilton, Barrie (ON) and Toronto. Ugly graffiti defaced an Edmonton synagogue just as it was celebrating its 100th anniversary early in 2007. This same synagogue was previously firebombed in 2000. In Richmond, a synagogue was vandalized during Holocaust Memorial Day with graffiti that included swastikas and a man being hanged, identified by the word “Jew”. As well, there were six incidents targeting Jewish community centres, including the firebombing of a Montreal Jewish community centre during the Passover holiday.

The need for ongoing vigilance is also highlighted by the nine cases involving a cemetery desecration in 2007, a significant number considering that there was only one case in 2006 and just two in 2005. During 2007, an Ottawa Jewish cemetery was vandalized three times over a three-month period, involving a total of more than 66 tombstones.

Security experts and law enforcement agencies continue to warn that Jewish institutions could be targets of terrorist-related activities in Canada. This threat of terrorism has had a profound impact on the Jewish community across the country. Threats from Al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups known to have a base in Canada, have been directed at Jews in particular. Past terrorist attacks on Jewish institutions abroad are a grim reminder that extremists consider Jews anywhere in the world legitimate targets. Meanwhile, there is the threat of home-grown terrorism to consider.

After attacks such as the Montreal school firebombing, it is clear that such concerns are very real and that security measures are essential. Jewish communal centers have been left on their own to meet the burden of securing their buildings and protecting the adults and children who use these facilities. The financial costs of providing security for religious and educational sites are an enormous burden for the communities involved. However, the government has an important role, both at the federal and at the provincial level, to protect its vulnerable communities from harm. In fact, government support is necessary to ensure that freedom of religion and the right to security - as enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* - can be guaranteed for all citizens.

Last year the Federal Government introduced a pilot project known as the Security Infrastructure Program to provide funding to help enhance the security infrastructure of communities targeted by hate-motivated crime. Limited funding has been made available to not-for-profit organizations linked to a community “with a demonstrated history of hate-motivated crime”. The funds are to help defray the costs of minor security infrastructure for places of worship, provincially recognized educational institutions, and community centres.

Recommendations:

- 1) The pilot Security Infrastructure Program should be maintained as a permanent government program.**
- 2) This line of funding should be expanded in order to meet the security needs of at-risk religious communities.**

iii) Countering Hate through the Human Rights Commissions

It is B’nai Brith Canada’s position that human rights commissions and tribunals remain valuable institutions. However, human rights commissions are today under a new threat from abusive complaints of incitement to hatred and are not adequately defended against these threats.

Some recent abusive complaints have highlighted procedural and substantive flaws in human rights commissions and tribunals. These flaws have allowed frivolous complainants to run roughshod over the rights of those who are targets of the complaints. Human rights commissions and tribunals need to recognize modern-day challenges to their traditional modes of operation. They must reform and modernize in order to maintain the integrity of their remedies and to ensure their relevancy into the future.

The current spate of abusive complaints has led to questioning of the jurisdiction of human rights commissions and tribunals over the communication of hatred. Our overall conclusion is that condemnation of the jurisdiction of human rights law over hate has become a surrogate for criticism which is more properly directed elsewhere: to abusive complaints, lack of training for human rights commission staff, and procedural flaws in the system.

Human rights commissions and tribunals have understood the dangers of Nazi, neo-Nazi and white supremacist ideologies when other jurisdictions have not. Indeed, that understanding has been one of the system’s strengths. However, now Canada is under threat from a new and different set of ideologies, in particular Islamism and political Islam. Human rights commissions and tribunals have yet to appreciate the dangers these ideologies pose to human rights. When dealing with these ideologies, human rights commissions have presented a disastrous combination of investigative zeal and substantive ignorance.

While the Canadian Human Rights Commission is itself reviewing these issues, we feel it is important for an independent enquiry to accept the need for reform and move ahead with the following recommendations as a matter of urgency.

Recommendations

- 1) Reform of the human rights commission system is urgently required, including educating commission staff as to the threat the ideologies of Islamism and political Islam pose to human rights in Canada.**
- 2) The commissions should have the power to award costs against complainants as a deterrent to frivolous complaints.**
- 3) There should be a comprehensive screening process before complaints are allowed to proceed through the system.**
- 4) Jurisdiction should be limited to the commission with the substantial connection to the complaint.**
- 5) Human rights commissions and tribunals should follow due process, including the right to know your accuser and the right to full disclosure.**

iv) Canada's Anti-terrorism Legislation

We believe that the first line of defense for human rights, and hence the first priority of any government, is the creation and protection of a safe and secure environment.

According to Canadian intelligence sources, there are presently more than 50 international terrorist organizations operating in this country, but the listing of organizations banned by Canada does not even come close to dealing with the enormity of this problem. One must question how it is possible for both listed and unlisted groups to continue to operate following their designation as illegal entities. Their continued presence and operational capability indicates that the current legislative safeguards are not working.

At a time when the need for protection against the threat of international terrorism is becoming more urgent, there is increasing pressure to weaken the *Anti-Terrorism Act*. We feel that there is a need for strong legislation - with due consideration for the human rights of all parties - to ensure a safe and secure environment for all Canadians. B'nai Brith Canada presented submissions on this theme to the House and Senate committees undertaking the mandatory review of the anti-terrorism legislation (see <http://www.bnaibrith.ca/pdf/AntiTerrorism05.pdf>).

In addition, Canada's *State Immunity Act* presently gives immunity to countries that sponsor, host and fund terrorist groups that have been involved in the murder of Canadian citizens.

Recommendations:

- 1) Canada should amend its terror listing to include all groups that use violence and terror to advance their political agenda anywhere in the world.**

- 2) **The *Anti-Terrorism Act* should be made retroactive so that individuals who were involved in terrorist operations prior to the enactment of the legislation, or attended terrorist training camps, can be apprehended.**
- 3) **Incitement to terrorism should be added to the *Act* as an indictable offence.**
- 4) **The offence of mischief to religious property, which was added to the *Criminal Code* as part of the anti-terrorism legislation, should be not be limited to synagogues, but should be invoked whenever Jewish schools and community buildings come under attack.**
- 5) **The *State Immunity Act* should be amended to allow for civil suits by individual victims of terror against states that sponsor terrorism.**

v) Immigration and Refugee Issues

Canada should be a safe haven for those fleeing persecution around the world. Given the Jewish community's experience with the consequences of the "none is too many" policy of Canada's WWII-era government, we are sensitive to any attempts to restrict the flow of *bona fide* immigrants and refugees. We are concerned, however, that some immigrants may be importing into Canada biases and prejudices learned in their birth countries, and may thus have difficulty integrating into the multicultural mosaic of Canadian society.

With the flow of immigration to Canada expected to rise in the upcoming years, efforts to assist new immigrants and refugees with their integration must be intensified both in the public and private sector. While concrete assistance towards meeting basic needs is critical for the establishment of those newly-arrived to Canada, any orientation should include educational material on the challenges and benefits of living in an open and tolerant society. It is quite apparent that many of our immigrants arrive from countries where an entrenched culture of tolerance and human rights either does not exist, or is not encouraged in mainstream society. In this sense, it is critical that the provincial governments include a curriculum that identifies respect for human rights as a major tenet of life in the province. While the government must play an integral role and should provide leadership and an overall structure when it comes to education, partnerships with community groups that have the required expertise should be encouraged, to help with the development of a curriculum and the necessary educational resource materials.

The issue of reasonable accommodation of the religious and cultural needs of new immigrants, as well of existing minority groups, caused much controversy in Quebec last year. B'nai Brith Canada presented a brief to the Bouchard Taylor Commission, setting out specific recommendations, which can be found at <http://bnaibrith.ca/files/brief-final-eng.pdf>. This is an area that must be addressed by all provinces, especially as the diversity of Canada's population increases.

An additional issue relates to individuals who immigrate to Canada, but find that their professional and academic credentials, or work experience acquired abroad, are not accepted here. There are both financial and human costs to this state of affairs. The Conference Board of

Canada estimates that this failure to utilize the talents of newcomers to Canada at between \$2 billion -3 billion dollars annually; the human costs are incalculable. At present, recognition of foreign credentials is primarily a provincial jurisdiction, though within the federal government, this issue is dealt with by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

As well, we raise concerns about the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place to safeguard the integrity of our immigration and refugee system. The risks to security and the potential for opening doors to terrorist elements must be faced head on as we create and strengthen an open and welcoming society in Canada. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) reports that some individuals may be taking advantage of our generous immigration and refugee policies in order to gain entry and standing in this country.

Recommendations:

- 1) Visa requirements for students and religious workers should be reviewed, and compliance monitored and enforced, in order to ensure that only individuals with *bona fide* credentials benefit from the protections afforded by our system.**
- 2) New immigrants should be provided with a course covering the essentials of human rights, multiculturalism and diversity in order to ease their transition into Canadian life and help dissipate lingering tensions linked to homeland conflicts.**
- 3) The task of recognizing the foreign credentials of immigrants should be led by the federal government, which should coordinate an initiative bringing together both federal and provincial professional bodies for the purpose of expediting recognition of foreign credentials.**
- 4) Government funding should be provided for community initiatives that promote dialogue and understanding and fight hate, such as B'nai Brith Canada's *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* and Anti-Hate Hotline.**

vi) War Criminals in Canada

More than sixty years after the end of the Second World War, the struggle to bring Nazi war criminals to justice in Canada has seen few results. The *Ninth Annual Report on Canada's Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Program 2005-2006* was released jointly by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Department of Justice and Solicitor General of Canada in 2007. According to the report, as of March, 2006, 218 allegations had not moved beyond the initial examination stages; 37 active files were being investigated and 7 cases were under litigation.

In February 2008, Michael Seifert, who tortured and killed at least 18 prisoners in Italy's Bolzano concentration camp between 1944 and 1945, was extradited to Italy to face the life sentence imposed on him *in absentia* after losing all appeals in Canada.

Revocation proceedings against Jura Skomateczuk and Josef Furman, both former guards at the Travniki concentration camp in Poland, were ongoing in Federal Court. In May, 2007 the federal government announced that it would revoke the citizenship of Walter Oberlander and Jacob Fast, clearing the way for their deportation. Those proceedings are still ongoing. However, the Federal government also announced that it would not be proceeding to strip the citizenship of Wasyl Odynsky (a guard at the SS forced labor camps of Trawniki and Poniatowa) and Vladimir Katriuk (a member of a Nazi mobile killing unit), despite court rulings in revocation proceedings that they were each guilty of lying about their war-time past on entry. B'nai Brith Canada has launched a court challenge seeking judicial review of that decision in light of a flawed process in which the federal cabinet was fed selective testimony not representative of the submissions of Jewish victims.

Clearly, the civil remedy by which the government seeks to denaturalize and deport alleged Nazi war criminals is not proving an effective remedy as currently implemented. Only one such individual was ever deported. Other cases have ended without resolution because the person under investigation passed away during the long delays, or the Minister chose not to recommend deportation, despite court rulings that the individuals had obtained citizenship by fraud.

In the case of Helmut Oberlander, in 2004 the Federal Court of Appeal allowed Oberlander's appeal and sent the matter back to the Minister to re-start the process. This would necessitate repeating all the steps of what is a cumbersome and often counter-productive process just to arrive at the same conclusion: that the individual lied about his past in order to gain entry into Canada – a fraudulent act that is grounds for revocation of citizenship and removal.

The prosecution of Nazi-war criminals must remain a priority despite the years of delay and inaction, since it is these very cases that will form an important jurisprudential base for legal action in war criminal prosecution cases from all conflicts, including modern day cases. Action is needed to deter modern day war criminals from seeing this country as a safe haven. Canada's *Report on the Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Program* claims that the war crimes program is effective but, as long as the Nazi-era cases are neglected, that is a gross exaggeration. Canada cannot represent itself as a leader in the fight against impunity, as the Ministers claim, until such time as there is closure on the Nazi-era cases.

Recommendations:

- 1. There should be an immediate move to present all outstanding cases on revocation to Cabinet.**
- 2. Amendments should be made to the *Citizenship Act* to ensure that war criminals can be efficiently processed and ultimately deported for their crimes against humanity. Such amendments would include consolidating the three necessary steps - Federal Court decision, revocation of citizenship, and deportation - into one step.**

vii) Aboriginal Issues

The water crisis in remote northern Ontario reserves has recently made headlines. However, this is just one example of the many problems facing the Aboriginal people of Canada. Gaps in education and skills, health care and housing must be closed. It is not acceptable that the high school graduation rate of Aboriginals is half the national average, nor that their life expectancy is significantly lower than that of the general community. In addition, many aboriginal youth are particularly vulnerable and feel marginalized by the wider community. The need for real and sustainable economic development on Aboriginal reserves and in urban settings is pressing if long-term improvement is to be seen. Equally, supports must be put in place to address the long-term risk factors threatening the youth of these communities.

In the aftermath of the hate filled remarks of David Ahenakew, B'nai Brith Canada has partnered with members of the Aboriginal community not just to seek rapprochement, but also to learn about the community's socio-economic challenges. On a recent trip to Northern Manitoba, members of B'nai Brith Canada witnessed first hand the deplorable living conditions that many Aboriginals are forced to endure. The leadership of these communities has expressed to us the inter-generational impact of years of poverty and disadvantage, and B'nai Brith Canada has pledged to add its voice to those demanding concrete and immediate improvements. This might well necessitate bringing in outside expertise to help develop strategies for self-sufficiency and sustainability, as well as experts in empowering and supporting at-risk minorities.

The Federal Government recently convened a summit to study such issues, during which it acknowledged that such gaps between Aboriginals and other Canadians are simply not acceptable in the 21st century. It is time for concrete action plans that will lift Aboriginal Canadians from lives of poverty and despair.

Recommendations:

- 1) Canada should implement as a matter of urgency action plans to ensure self sufficiency and sustainability for Aboriginal communities.**
- 2) Funding should be made available for support programs for aboriginal youth struggling to overcome poverty and disadvantage.**

2. INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

i) Canada's Response to the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a hallmark of Canada's Middle East policy has been its support for Israel's legitimate right to safe and secure borders. However, as long as Canada does not insist that the Palestinians meet their basic pre-requisite Road Map obligations "to dismantle their terrorist organizations, confiscate weapons, [and] arrest the planners and perpetrators of terrorist acts...", the goal of true security for Israel cannot be met.

Current Canadian government policy supports “Palestinian elections and the reform of Palestinian governance”, but nowhere is there any insistence that the emerging Palestinian state respect human rights, end incitement to hatred, reject terrorism and move to disarm and outlaw terrorist groups. This is a glaring omission in Canada’s foreign policy. Increasingly, the Palestinian state-run apparatus is engaged in incitement to hatred and violence. This is emanating not just from Hamas, but from the largely-perceived ‘moderate’ Palestinian Authority leader, Mahmoud Abbas. The glorification of terrorism continues to permeate all sectors of Palestinian society.

In terms of Jerusalem, Canada persists in labeling East Jerusalem “occupied territory”, which in itself prejudices the city’s final status. Canada refuses to recognize Israel as the country of birth for persons born in Jerusalem. These positions ignore the fact that Jerusalem is Israel’s historical, national and religious capital, and the fact that only under Israel’s re-unification and control has there been freedom of access and worship for all religions.

Court proceedings spearheaded by B’nai Brith challenged Passport Canada’s discriminatory policy of refusing to note Israel as the country of birth on Canadian passports for those born in Jerusalem. B’nai Brith holds that this policy constitutes religious discrimination – a denial of the same fundamental rights and freedoms permitted to all other passport holders who are free to record their country of birth. B’nai Brith contends that the withholding of this right in effect seeks to sever the inalienable bond between the Jewish State and its national, religious and historic capital. Furthermore, some officials at border posts consider passports without a country of birth to be incomplete, and passport holders are therefore subject to unwarranted scrutiny, with possible limitations to their mobility. The legal proceedings were dismissed, necessitating a re-definition of Canadian foreign policy on the status of Jerusalem, which still fails to recognize this city as the capital of Israel.

Security Council Resolution 242 calls for a “just settlement to the refugee problem”, but has largely been taken to refer exclusively to Palestinian refugees and their descendents in perpetuity. However, a Jewish refugee question was created simultaneously when Jews were expelled or fled out of fear from neighboring Arab and Muslim countries, primarily in the post-1948 period. Canada is gavel holder of the Refugee Working Group, and as such our government is in a position to ensure that this issue receives equal attention. In 2007, *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries* convened an international Committee of Legal Experts, co-chaired by Prof. Irwin Cotler and David Matas, legal counsel to B’nai Brith Canada, who produced a report entitled: *Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: The Case for Rights and Redress* (see <http://www.justiceforjews.com/legal.html>.) This report, released in 2004, documents strong political and legal arguments for supporting the legitimate rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries.

Recommendations:

- 1) Canada should insist that the Palestinian Authority fulfill its obligations to dismantle terrorist organizations, confiscate weapons, and arrest the planners and perpetrators of terrorist acts.**
- 2) Canada should condemn suicide bombings as a crime against humanity.**

3) Canada should revoke its current discriminatory practice of not allowing persons born in Jerusalem to have their country of birth – Israel – noted on their passports.

4) Canada should work to ensure that the issue of Jewish refugees from Middle East countries is included in discussions of a “just resolution of the refugee problem”.

ii) Iran

Foreign policy needs coherence. What that means is that when two events are related, the Government of Canada needs to connect the dots. As long as the Government disassociates interconnected phenomena, the foreign policy of the Government is doomed to incoherence.

The two phenomena are the development by Iran of nuclear weapons by stealth. The second is the overt rabid anti-Zionist hatred of the Government of Iran, the labelling of Israel as a disgraceful blot which should be wiped off the face of the earth, and the regime’s record of Holocaust denial. In fact, the President of Iran convened a Holocaust denial conference in 2006, which was attended by a Canadian university professor. The connection between the nuclear arming of Iran and its president’s anti-Jewish rhetoric is that Iran is moving towards a genocidal nuclear attack against Israel. President Ahmadinejad is inciting genocide against the Jews by calling for the killing of Jews, endorsing suicide bombers, threatening to attack Israel and "egging on Hezbollah and Hamas," two Middle Eastern Islamist terrorist groups.

The human-rights abusing regime of Iran is a threat not just to Israel, but to other minority groups in the country. Human rights abuses against the Baha’i community of Iran give just one example of endemic abuses perpetrated by Ahmadinejad’s regime. As well, Iran is a threat to the international community

Genocide is the gravest crime known to humanity. Waiting for genocide to happen is not acceptable. Canada must act now against the threat of genocide that Ahmadinejad poses. Canadian foreign policy must have as a priority thwarting any such attack. Toward that end, Canada can use its influence in the international arena to call for the indictment of the Iranian president on charges of incitement to genocide. B’nai Brith has called on the Canadian government to take action against the Iranian President by pushing for his prosecution in Canada should he seek entry, as well by pressing for charges to be laid in international fora. For the full text of the indictment against Ahmadinejad, as prepared by B’nai Brith Canada, go to www.bnaibrith.ca/pdf/institute/IndictmentIranianPresidentMarch07.pdf.

Recommendations:

1) The Government should ban the entry of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad into Canada.

2) The Government should prosecute Ahmadinejad for incitement to genocide against the Jewish people should he show up in Canada despite the ban on his entry.

- 3) **The Government should request the United Nations Security Council to refer to the International Criminal Court under Court Statute article 13(b) the situation of incitement to genocide of the Jewish people by persons in authority in Iran.**
- 5) **The Government of Canada, under Article IX of the *Genocide Convention*, should ask the International Court of Justice to find Iran in violation of Article I of the *Genocide Convention* for failure to prosecute Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for incitement to genocide against the Jewish people.**

iii) United Nations Reform

Canada has long championed reform of a United Nations system that gives a platform to tyrannical dictatorships and rogue regimes, while at the same time denying a voice to the State of Israel, a sister democracy involved in the global war on terror. Toward this end, Canada played a leading role in the development and inauguration just over two years ago of a Human Rights Council, which replaced the morally bankrupt United Nations Human Rights Commission. The hope had been that this new Council would deviate from its predecessor and repudiate the inherent anti-Israel biases of the Commission. More than two years into this process, this hope has not been realized.

To the contrary, the UN Human Rights Council has proven itself ill-equipped and unwilling to move beyond the failings of the Commission and constrain the real human rights abusers. Instead, it has channelled almost all its energy into reflexive anti-Israel posturing that serves no purpose other than to pander to the political will of the dictatorial and oppressive regimes which hold membership in this world body.

Canada, to its credit, has taken on a leadership role at the Council, often being the sole country to vote against resolutions that unfairly target Israel. As well, Canada has been the lone voice in support of Israel at numerous Special Sessions of the Council convened for the sole purpose of condemning the Jewish State. Amongst the resolutions opposed by Canada this year was the heavily-biased one-sided resolution in January 2008 that condemned Israel, while never once referencing the ongoing barrage of rocket attacks aimed at Israel's civilians by Hezbollah during the war in Lebanon. Rockets continue to be launched at Israeli cities such as Sderot by Hamas terrorists operating in Gaza, the very area from which Israel withdrew its troops in 2005.

The UN General Assembly in New York continues unabated its traditional open season of Israel-bashing that begins each year in the late fall. Last year was no different, with no less than twenty resolutions relating to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the overwhelming majority of which were one-sided and biased against Israel. Canada's historical record of UN General Assembly voting has been to favour a system that unabashedly and negatively singles out Israel. In 2005, under then-Prime Minister Paul Martin, Canada tenuously embarked on a shift in its votes in favour of Israel, in what appeared to be a spirit of recognition of a gross inconsistency in Canada's prior voting history. This small, albeit welcome shift in votes, seemed to suggest that Canada would seek to redress the wrongs committed against Israel at the UN. However, apart from positive changes on three small items in 2005, Canada supported a range of resolutions that demonized and delegitimized Israel, employing double standards used against no other country.

Since then, under the government of Stephen Harper, Canada has embarked on a much more vigorous approach of voting against far more anti-Israel resolutions. While Canada's voting record is far better in this regard than ever before, Canada will at some point need to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at confronting the manipulation of the UN system by a clique of human-rights-abusing-states that seek to divert attention from the many crisis areas of the world in order to invoke routine and counterproductive condemnations of Israel.

Recommendations:

- 1) Canada should continue its strong leadership role at the UN to counter the efforts of states that manipulate the proceedings in order to condemn and marginalize Israel.**
- 2) Canada should adopt a zero tolerance policy for Israel-bashing and vote "no" on each and every anti-Israel resolution.**
- 3) Canada should step up its efforts to promote UN reform, by insisting on rules and regulations that deny membership in the Human Rights Council to countries that are themselves human rights abusers. These countries should not be allowed to stand for vote in their regional blocs, as is the current process.**

iv) Crisis in the Sudan

The current crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan is characterized by systematic killing, rape, forced displacement, and the destruction of homes, livestock and crops by Arab militias [*Janjaweed*] backed by the Sudanese government. Over 400,000 are dead through violence or disease, while more than two million people have been displaced. The systematic destruction of wells and irrigation systems has left survivors further vulnerable to death by starvation or disease. The ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity being perpetrated in Darfur are still failing to mobilize concerted world action to stop the killing.

With the continued deterioration of the situation on the ground, the humanitarian crisis in the area is intense. B'nai Brith Canada recently came together with Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center to support a large shipment of medicines to Sudan's war-torn Darfur, in order to assist in meeting the urgent medical needs of refugees in camps across the area.

In 2006-7, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) disbursed \$133.8 million for projects and initiatives in Sudan, such as humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. It also offered up to 100 Canadian Forces advisers and intelligence officers to assist in ending the violence, an offer that was refused by the Sudanese Government. However, Canada continues to deal with the Sudanese Government as if it were innocent of all wrongdoing.

Much more needs to be done by Canada in terms of recognizing the magnitude of the atrocities that are taking place, acknowledging who is responsible and intervening in a tangible way, before the situation deteriorates even further. Considering that the "Responsibility to Protect" is a key component of Canada's Human Security Agenda, this country should be prepared to apply this principle of international protection to the situation in Darfur.

Recommendations:

- 1) Canada should make Darfur a central plank in its foreign policy and take the lead in coalescing the international community to resolve the crisis.**
- 2) A significant contingent of Canadian soldiers should be sent to assist in securing the area so that international aid can be effectively deployed.**
- 3) Canada's aid package should be commensurate with the magnitude of the humanitarian disaster that is unfolding.**
- 4) In the international arena, Canada should encourage as expeditiously as possible the full deployment of the UNAMID security force, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1769.**
- 5) Canada should support international sanctions against the Sudanese government if it does not cooperate with peace efforts and aid initiatives, in order to stem the tide of petroleum dollars reaching its coffers, much of which is used to purchase weaponry rather than reaching those in need.**

v) Durban II

The Durban Review Conference, commonly referred to as Durban II, is to take place in April 2009 as a follow-up to the original *UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance* held in 2001 in Durban, at which antisemitic and anti-Israel propaganda were rampant, especially at the NGO component of the conference. Durban I was intended as a premier anti-racism conference. Instead, it degenerated into a "hate-fest" directed at Israel and the Jewish delegates attending the conference.

Preparatory committee meetings indicate clearly that Durban II will be a repeat of the hatred and racism openly on display at Durban I. The same players that tainted the Durban I process are hard at work on Durban II. The chair for this conference is Libya, an abuser of human rights, which has a history of persecuting its Jews. Preparatory meetings were purposely held on major Jewish Holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Passover, so to ensure that Jewish organizations would not be present.

B'nai Brith Canada strongly applauded the Government's announcement that Canada would be pulling out of Durban II, a move not clearly supported by all the political parties of Canada. Only by refusing to participate in this latest round of abuse of the UN system can Canadians make clear that human rights for all are non-divisible. Durban II must be a "no-go" until such time as it can be shown that participants intend to move constructively forward with a meaningful anti-racism agenda.

Recommendations:

- 1) The Canadian Government should ensure that no government funds are used by NGOs to attend Durban II.**
- 2) The Government should continue to urge other governments not to attend Durban II.**

APPENDIX

i) Who We Are, What We Do

B'nai Brith Canada is the Jewish community's foremost human rights agency, operating in this country since 1875. Its team of dedicated volunteers and professional staff is engaged in combating antisemitism, bigotry and racism in Canada and abroad. Its wide-ranging educational and social programming, charitable work and human rights initiatives, demonstrate its commitment to the principle of "People Helping People".

B'nai Brith Canada is the Jewish community's only independent, self-funded, national organization. Its popular-based grassroots support consists of thousands of Canadian families with diverse backgrounds and interests, empowering the organization to speak on their behalf on key issues of concern to the Jewish community.

ii) Departments of B'nai Brith Canada

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

The Centre is responsible for recruiting members across Canada, who form the core of a network of B'nai Brith lodges across the country. Through this network, the Centre initiates many diverse and creative social programs that address local needs, and co-sponsors a variety of activities with social agencies and community groups. Its program of Volunteer Services provides diverse social action programs in support of the aged, the physically and emotionally challenged and others in need, such as its Affordable Housing Programs in Toronto and Montreal, and a free-standing Alzheimer's Home in Toronto.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICE

This office liaises regularly with members of parliament, civil servants, ambassadors and opinion-makers residing in the nation's capital, providing a strong voice on issues of concern to the community. B'nai Brith's leadership meets regularly with Canadian politicians and government ministers to discuss issues of concern to the Jewish community, and to present the organization's positions on the key issues of the day, both national and international.

LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The League for Human Rights works to combat antisemitism, racism and bigotry, providing training on multiculturalism, human rights education, harassment and equity issues. It operates a 24/7 Anti-Hate Hotline (1-800-892-BNAI [2624]) for victims of antisemitic incidents, and publishes an annual *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents*. League members interact with the community, the police, synagogues and schools, legal and legislative experts, and government agencies. Its outreach activities and educational initiatives are geared toward fostering positive inter-community dialogue, for example, through its Black-Jewish Dialogue, Women's Interfaith Dialogue and interaction with the aboriginal community.

INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

B'nai Brith Canada created the Institute for International Affairs to monitor human rights abuses worldwide. It advocates on behalf of Jewish communities in distress, and intervenes at both the governmental level and at international fora on a wide range of issues, whether political, religious, or cultural. The Institute conducts periodic fact-finding missions, and partners with other human rights organizations and academic institutions. It provides public lectures, confidential briefings and in-depth publications on issues relating to the safety and security of the State of Israel and the Middle East conflict in general.

CANADA-ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (CIPAC)

The mandate of CIPAC is to encourage positive Canada-Israel relations through a progressive activist agenda involving all sectors of the community. CIPAC, which works in conjunction with the Institute for International Affairs, has committed itself to holding a series of nation-wide town hall meetings each year to elicit input from the community on issues affecting Canada-Israel relations.

CAMPUS DESK

B'nai Brith professionals provide advice, assistance and resources for beleaguered students on campus, who face vehement anti-Israel campaigns and rising antisemitism. B'nai Brith also assists students in their own Israel-related activities, by providing research and educational materials, as well as expert speakers on a wide range of issues. The organization offers internships to students, and training in the areas of human rights and international affairs.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

The Legal Department works closely with League and Institute professionals to provide an integrated approach to the organization's human rights work. The Department advises on the legal ramifications of proposed domestic and international legislation relating to issues such as hate, racism, citizenship, terrorism, and human rights. It also provides a mentorship program for *pro bono* law students.

THE JEWISH TRIBUNE

The *Jewish Tribune*, the weekly newspaper published by B'nai Brith, covers the key issues of relevance to the Canadian Jewish community. With the largest circulation in Canada of any Anglo-Jewish paper, it reports on events across the country in an honest and forthright manner, and solicits opinions from a wide variety of Canadian stakeholders, spanning the political, cultural, and social arenas.

SPORTS CORPORATION

B'nai Brith Canada offers its members an opportunity to participate in diverse sporting events. Through its rapidly expanding baseball, hockey, basketball, soccer and bowling leagues, athletes of all ages share in the camaraderie and social events that are part of the dynamic sports network. B'nai Brith Sports is also heavily involved in national and international tournaments, including the first annual B'nai Brith Israel Classic, which featured the Israeli Junior National Hockey Team. B'nai Brith Sports demonstrates the value of good sportsmanship, and is open to Jewish men and women at least 18 years of age who are members of the organization.

THE FOUNDATION

The B'nai Brith Foundation is responsible for raising the funds that enable the organization to realize its continuing commitment to the ideal of "People Helping People". With the assistance of a dedicated volunteer base, the Foundation generates the financial support that secures the present and future viability of services and programs that enrich the community. An independent charitable organization, B'nai Brith relies on the generosity of individuals to realize its goals, and assist the organization in maintaining its commitment to the next generation of members. In 2005 the Foundation was proud to honour Frank Stronach in Toronto, Réal Raymond in Montreal and Raymond L. McFeetors in Winnipeg, for their distinguished records of community service and extraordinary contributions furthering core Canadian values, such as democracy and human rights.