



# Statements and Speeches

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## **CANADA'S POSITION ON THE UN RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PALESTINE QUESTION**

A Statement by the Canadian delegate Michael Kergin, to the Seventh Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, June 26, 1982

Canada views the present hostilities in Lebanon with profound sadness. A human tragedy is unfolding in a small country whose recent history has been marred by recurrent periods of violence and destruction. Again the world community is faced with an eruption of conflict which is having the most horrendous effect on the security and well-being of the civilian population. The fighting must stop in this unhappy country so that the rebuilding can begin.

We should not minimize the complexities of the situation; we recognize that Lebanon is an integral part of a region which itself is in the grip of a long-standing conflict. We are not confident that Lebanon can emerge completely from its present anguish unless wider issues in the Arab/Israeli dispute and the problems of the Palestinians are addressed and resolved. Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty, unity and strength for which we so fervently hope, can only be assured in the framework of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East that guarantees peace and security for all states in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Canada has spoken out on the recent events in Lebanon. On June 9, Mr. Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, in a public message to the Prime Minister of Israel said the following:

"With Israeli air-raids in Lebanon and rocket attacks on northern Israel already in progress, my letter to you on June 5 counselled restraint to avoid the dangers that further military action would bring. In that same letter I said we deplored and condemned as heinous crimes acts of terrorism against targets in Israel and elsewhere; but I also said that it was important to avoid actions which fuel rather than dampen the flames of violence and hatred in the Middle East.

I am dismayed by the subsequent escalation of the conflict represented by the massive movement of Israeli forces into Lebanon. Great human suffering is being caused, and the rapid northward expansion of Israeli operations is posing an increasing risk of a wider war. We in Canada understand your natural concern for Israeli lives in the Galilee, and believe that acts of violence against Israel and its citizens as well as against all others in the area must cease. But we cannot accept the proposition that the present military activities are justified or that they will provide the long-term security which you seek for the Israeli people.

**Escalation  
of conflict  
deplored**

I appeal to you to respond positively to the unanimous Security Council resolution by agreeing to a cease-fire and withdrawing immediately and unconditionally from Lebanese territory so that the difficult but necessary task of working for reconciliation in the area can begin again."

Thus ends my quotation from Mr. Trudeau's message to Mr. Begin.

**Support with reservations**

With respect to the resolution before us, my delegation supports its main thrust and we therefore intend to vote in favour of it. We do, however, wish to express our concerns and reservations regarding certain elements in it.

Specifically on the reference in the preamble to "acts of aggression" by Israel, my delegation would wish to note that, under Article 39 of the Charter, the Security Council has the sole responsibility for making a determination of the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. Canada therefore considers it inappropriate for this Assembly to imply such a determination in one of its resolutions.

Since we do not recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, we would also like to point out that the preamble implies a status regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization which my government has not endorsed.

**Other important issues**

Moreover, contrary to the assertion in the preamble, we believe there are a number of other issues central to the Arab/Israeli conflict besides the Palestine question. Equally important is the existence of Israel in the Middle East and its right to secure and recognized boundaries. This principle, enshrined in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, is fundamental to our policy and a prerequisite for peace in the region.

In the present critical and rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East, my delegation calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint in their actions to prevent any further deterioration or widening of this conflict. In the days ahead it is essential that nations truly apply the basic principle of international law carefully developed over the centuries and embodied in the United Nations Charter and other documents, that is: respect for territorial integrity, non-use of force in resolving disputes and universal observance of basic human rights and freedoms. Only on this basis will a solid peace be secured in the Middle East.

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