

17 May 2013

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

Re: Crises in the Middle East

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

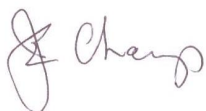
I write to commend to you the attached letter signed by the leaders of all 24 member churches of The Canadian Council of Churches.

We are concerned about the continuing humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Syria; the uncertainty and turmoil with democratic transitions in Egypt; the unresolved decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the rising tensions and stresses within and between various countries in the region.

As Canadians we are proud of the contributions Canada has made to alleviate the needs of people through multilateral and civil society channels, and its record of advocating for human rights for everyone. We therefore write to encourage you and the Government of Canada to

- respond robustly and generously to the pressures and tensions experienced by both displaced peoples and by the host countries in the region that provide refuge;
- to lead in the protection of human rights with special attention to the rights of children, women and minority groups;
- to hold firm to the obligation for all state and non-state actors to respect international law, particularly in situations of armed conflict; and
- to assist us in our efforts as churches to work with local peacemakers and providers of humanitarian assistance in the region.

Please be assured that churches across Canada continue to hold you and your government in our prayers.



Major Jim Champ
President