

Delegations Visit MP Offices Across Canada to Demand a Full Arms Embargo on Israel

The June 13th #ArmsEmbargoNow Day of Action marks the start of a summer push to end Canada's arms trade with Israel

By [Arms Embargo Now](#)

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On Thursday, June 13th, constituents of [45 MPs](#) paid visits to their riding offices, demanding that they call for a full and immediate arms embargo on Israel. The delegations — part of a national #ArmsEmbargoNow Day of Action — carried giant versions of the [#ArmsEmbargoNow statement](#) for MPs to sign.

Constituents rallied, chanted, and called on their MPs to do everything in their power to cut the flow of weapons to and from Israel, from Yellowknife to Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke to Central Nova, and Victoria to Saint John-Rothesay.

A number of delegations were met by police or private security as they attempted to deliver the sign-on letter to their elected representatives; others found that their MP's staff had closed the office for the day in response to the announcement of their visit.

As of July 14th, 20 of 155 Liberal, 22 of 24 NDP and both Green MPs have signed-on to an abbreviated [version](#) of the statement, which acknowledges the catastrophe caused by Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza, and calls on the Canadian government to impose a full and immediate arms embargo on Israel.

Five Liberal MPs, Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre), Sean Casey (Charlottetown), Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek), Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport), and Helena Jaczek (Markham), broke rank from the party line and signed-on to the statement in the days leading up to the national #ArmsEmbargoNow Day of Action. MP Jaczek signed on just hours before a protest at her office was scheduled to occur.

“Today’s actions put MPs who still have not signed on to the demand for a two-way arms embargo with Israel on notice: When Parliament rises later this month, you can expect your constituents to continue raising the demand at barbecues, picnics, and other public events throughout the summer. We aren’t going on holiday until Canada imposes a full arms embargo on Israel, and you will have no peace in your ridings until Palestine is free,” said Emma Jackson of the Palestine Solidarity Network.

The [#ArmsEmbargoNow statement](#), first published on May 7th, urges the Canadian government to fulfill its legal and moral obligations to do everything in its power to protect Palestinians in Gaza from the serious risk of genocide and from grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law perpetrated by Israel in its ongoing assault on and siege of Gaza, including putting an immediate end to the trade of arms and military technology with Israel. The statement has been endorsed by more than 400 Palestinian associations, labour unions, faith institutions, human rights and environmental organizations, and community groups across Canada.

The full list of MP signatories is available on the [#ArmsEmbargoNow website here](#).

In parallel to this initiative, the Bloc Québécois, which holds 32 seats in Parliament, has sent a letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly, asking that “the Government of Canada temporarily suspend all trade in arms and military technology with Israel.”

Previously, in March, the NDP had put forward a non-binding motion in Parliament that called on Canada to “suspend all trade in military goods and technology with Israel.” Fearing a split in the Liberal caucus, the Trudeau government negotiated a watered-down version of the motion, including a clause that would “cease the further authorization and transfer of arms exports to Israel to ensure compliance with Canada’s arms export regime...” That version passed with 204 MPs in favour and 117 against. It was moved by the NDP with the support of the Bloc Québécois, Greens, and almost all Liberal MPs, including Prime Minister Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Joly. Only the Conservatives and three other MPs voted against it.

At the time, Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly made a verbal commitment to pause approvals of future export permits of military equipment bound for Israel. However, it is not publicly verifiable that the Government has taken concrete steps to do so, and Global Affairs Canada [has confirmed](#) that it has continued to allow the export of military goods to Israel under permits authorized before January 8th, 2024. Crucially, Canada also continues to sign contracts to buy weapons and technology from Israeli arms companies, which the non-binding motion passed in March does not prohibit, just as it fails to close the loopholes that permit Canadian companies to export weapons components to Israel via the United States. The campaign for MPs to publicly support the [#ArmsEmbargoNow](#) statement was initiated to address these major shortcomings and to renew the momentum for a real and comprehensive arms embargo on Israel.

“Israel’s assault on Gaza has killed more than 37,200 Palestinians. It is blocking aid, manufacturing a humanitarian disaster and causing children to starve. The Canadian government must take meaningful action to stop this now. It has all the policy tools it needs to sanction Israel and impose a two-way arms embargo, including the Special Economic Measures Act. It must stop obfuscating, and take the very concrete action it is capable of to end its complicity with Israel’s genocidal actions in Gaza,” said Niall

Clapham Ricardo, Special Operations Coordinator for Independent Jewish Voices Canada.

“We recognize that ending Canadian arms exports to Israel may impact some workers in the arms industry,” said Simon Black of Labour Against the Arms Trade. “That’s why labour unions, and friends of labour in Parliament, are urging the government to work with unions representing these workers to develop plans for a just transition that secures their livelihoods. Workers do not want to be complicit with Israel’s genocidal violence.”

Last Saturday, Israel carried out a military operation in the Nuseirat refugee camp to free four Israeli hostages and killed more than 270 Palestinians, including at least 64 children. Hundreds more were injured.

“The massacre in Nuseirat is yet another horrific example of Israel’s devaluation of Palestinian lives, one of so many we have witnessed over its more than eight month-long military assault on and siege of Gaza, and in which the Canadian government remains deeply complicit as long as it continues to engage in the arms trade with Israel,” said Rachel Small with World BEYOND War. “MPs from all parties must join their constituents in demanding an arms embargo now to end the flow of all weapons to and from Israel.”

Accounts from Delegation Members

Davenport

“When Davenport for Palestine reps met with Julie Dzerowicz last week, she was initially reluctant to formally support a two-way embargo. We laid out a clear argument about Canada’s ongoing complicity in Israel’s genocide and about how our weapons trade continues to violate both domestic and international law. We emphasized the heartbreak and anger of our communities as we witnessed massacre after massacre, for eight unbearable months. And we were able to point to a very mobilized base in her riding. We could say with confidence that over 300 constituents had emailed asking her to sign the statement, and that dozens had called and visited the office in the previous week alone. We could say, “If you don’t sign, we’ll have a thousand people at your office next Thursday,” and she knew it was true. The community organizing we’d been doing for months matters—it is a powerful force, and Julie signed on the next day. Now we’re sending our members and supporters to other ridings in the GTA to support our neighbours as they push their own MPs to join the call!” – Johanna Lewis, Davenport for Palestine

Brampton East

“Today a small group of residents arrived at Maninder Sidhu’s office, MP of Brampton East, to invite him to sign on to the Arms Embargo Now statement as his colleague Brampton Centre MP Shafqat Ali has done. But when we arrived, we found that his office was closed to the public, and property management proceeded to harass and threaten us. They claimed we had vandalized private property by using scotch tape to hang posters, and that we were trespassing by trying to go to the office of our elected official. After we had made it clear we were leaving, management continued to film us and followed us to our vehicles, tore down our posters, and threatened to call the police. We

have been calling our MP for months. We have sent emails and even dropped off pamphlets at his office. Still he has ignored us, Maninder Sidhu has been silent for months. Shame on him for trying to silence his constituents instead of representing us and taking action to end the violence against his own constituents' family members in Gaza". – Cara DeSantis, Brampton 4 Ceasefire

Vancouver Granville

"Since we started organizing in late 2023, the growth of VanGran4Palestine's grassroots movement – with close to 300 engaged citizens in our WhatsApp group, 1,500+ subscribers to our mailing list, and over 3,000 followers on Instagram – has been astonishing. We have used our collective power to push our MP Taleeb Noormohamed much farther than he would otherwise go. When people lead politicians follow.

Over the past six months, we've led Taleeb to facilitate meetings for Palestinian Canadians and help expedite processing of PR applications both in and outside of his constituency. He attended our town hall and left to rousing chants of "VOTE YES" to the NDP's Opposition Day Demands. And while the Liberal Party might have completely watered down these demands in order to agree to them, it was Taleeb that brought them on board, realizing the tide was turning on the Party.

Today, we visited his riding office to demand that he support a full and immediate arms embargo on Israel. We arrived with a large-sized Arms Embargo Now statement, ready for him to sign. We have left it there for him, along with a canvas filled with personal messages from his constituents, making it clear that we will continue to push him to do everything in his power to make the Canadian government cancel existing export permits, close all export loopholes, stop all planned purchases of Israeli weapons, and implement a two-way Arms Embargo on Israel."

– Atiya Jaffar, Vancouver-Granville for Palestine

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Featured image: Protest outside MP Julie Dabrusin's office. Photo by Catherine Cachia

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