

Letter to Senators from Ken Stone

July 5, 2012

Dear Senator:

I too am deeply disturbed by your public attack on the motion to boycott products of illegal Israeli settlements proposed by the United Church of Canada.

I am Jewish and take deep offense at the threats being levelled against the United Church of Canada by you and by a handful of leaders of Jewish organizations in Canada who claim to speak for Canadian Jews but who really are only the voice in Canada of the Israeli government.

It may come as a surprise to you that a majority of people in the world, and probably in Canada, do NOT support the continuation of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in direct contravention of United Nations resolution 242 and a host of other UN resolutions. I hope a polling firm does some representative sampling of Jewish opinion within Israel and around the world on this same question. It would not surprise me at all that, even among Jews the world over, the majority opinion would be to dismantle the settlements. They are a glaring obstacle to peace.

I hope the United Church has the fortitude at its upcoming General Council meeting to adopt a selective boycott of products of the illegal Jewish-only settlements in the Occupied West Bank. Such a move would be completely in line with international law, with the social justice aims of the United Church, and with the intention to protect the endangered existence of their (and your) co-religionists (i.e. Christian Palestinians) in that tortured land.

Instead of dancing to the tune of the Israeli state, I suggest you take a trip (using your ample taxpayer-funded salary) to the West Bank and, with guidance from the Palestinian Authority, witness the living conditions of the Christian and Muslim Palestinians under Israeli occupation. With your own eyes, you should also see, as I have, the conditions of life of the Palestinians in the refugee camps of Lebanon (or any of the "border" countries) where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians (both Christians and Muslims), displaced from their homes and farms, have waited in poverty and misery for up to 60 years to return, as guaranteed under the Geneva Convention of 1949, to their Palestinian homeland.

If a split ensues between the United Church and the "official" Jewish-Canadian spokespeople for the Israeli government, over the much-needed boycott of products of the illegal Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, this split was long overdue.

Sincerely,

Ken Stone
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Canada