

January 18, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal MPs Join 250+ Canadians Hunger Striking for Arms Embargo on Israel

TORONTO, ON – Over 250 Canadians, including two sitting Members of Parliament, are on a hunger strike today, and are calling on the Canadian government to enforce an arms embargo on Israel. Gaza Starving, the grassroots group coordinating the hunger strikes, held a press conference this morning in Toronto to publicly launch this hunger strike campaign.

“For 104 days, Israel has attacked and destroyed the medical system in Gaza,” said Dr. Tarek Loubani, a London, Ontario emergency physician who has worked in Gaza for over a decade. “My surviving colleagues there are forced to amputate the limbs of children and perform cesarean sections and surgeries in brutal, primitive conditions. Doctors treat patients despite themselves being hungry, thirsty and grieving the loss of their loved ones. Hunger striking to stop sending more weapons to Israel is the least that I can do.”

Over 250 Canadians across 11 provinces and territories will be on hunger strike today. They are joining a growing movement of Canadians who have either completed or registered for over 1100 hunger strikes since the campaign began a few weeks ago.

Two of those joining the hunger strike are Green Party of Canada Leader Elizabeth May and NDP MP Niki Ashton.

“I will be joining the mass hunger strike for Gaza, and I know many people across the country will be doing the same,” said MP Ashton in a recorded message. “We are also calling for action: an arms embargo on Israel. Canada must stop exporting arms to Israel now.”

Hunger strikes have been used throughout history to resist unjust policies. In the case of Gaza, these hunger strikes take on additional meaning because of the total blockade that Israel has imposed on over two million Palestinians, which has led to widespread starvation.

“Currently every single person in Gaza is hungry, a quarter of the population are starving and struggling to find food and drinkable water, and famine is imminent,” said Dr. Michael Fakhri, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. “We have never seen an entire civilian population made to go hungry this completely and quickly. Israel is destroying Gaza’s food system and using food as a weapon against the Palestinian people.”

The urgency of an arms embargo against Israel has only increased as Israel is currently on trial at the International Court of Justice for the crime of Genocide.

In 2022, Canada sent over \$21 million of military goods directly to Israel, including \$3 million in bombs, torpedoes, missiles and other explosives. [These figures](#) exclude the military components exported to the United States by dozens of [companies](#) across Canada before

being supplied to the Israeli military, including Canadian-made components integrated into the Israeli F-35I fighter jet, which is routinely used in the ongoing bombardment of Gaza.

“People across Canada have watched in horror as the Israeli military has killed over 24,000 Palestinians in Gaza in the last three months. It is horrific that Canadian weaponry has played a key role in the massacre of thousands of children and the destruction of nearly 70% of Gaza’s homes” said Rachel Small, World BEYOND War’s Canada Organizer and supporter of the campaign. “Without the support of weapons exported from Canada, the US, and Europe, Israel could not carry out this carnage in Gaza. If the Canadian government won’t stop the flow of weapons to Israel, then people across the country are forced to take whatever actions we can to stop a genocide.”

“It’s appalling that so many Canadians feel like they have no other option but to go on a hunger strike to convince our government to stop supporting a genocide,” said Nadine Nasir, an organizer with Gaza Starving.

“While Palestinians continue to be bombed and starved, Canadians will not stop hunger striking until our government stops all weapons exports to Israel” added Nasir.

Media Contact: Mayssan Shuja - gazastarving@gmail.com - 416-709-0573