



Response to Petition Réponse à une Pétition

No./Nu. 1-20(1)

Petition Tabled by Ms. Kate Reid on February 27, 2024

Response by the Honourable R.J. Simpson, Premier

A Ceasefire and End to Canadian Support for the Plausible Genocide in Gaza

Understanding that there are Northwest Territories' (NWT) residents who have a personal connection to some individuals currently in Gaza and that are affected by the terrible violence that persists there, as a community, we support them and their families. This is a difficult time for those impacted by this conflict. During conflicts like this, we need to come together as a community and support each other. I am encouraged by the support I see through the number of NWT residents that signed this petition.

The Government of the NWT (GNWT) is pleased that in March 2024, the Government of Canada restored funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which had been withdrawn temporarily, as requested in your petition. UNRWA provides support to residents in Gaza, and as noted in your petition, the International Court of Justice is involved in decisions relating to this conflict. This is an issue that is wholly within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada was a signatory to the Genocide Convention in 1948 and is well versed in its obligations. It is incumbent on each of us to support and respect human rights and do our part to be good global citizens. The GNWT is focused on establishing priorities and a mandate that supports the residents of the NWT. Global affairs, such as the current conflict in Gaza, are outside of the jurisdiction of the NWT.

The GNWT provides support to residents in the NWT impacted by this conflict and will continue to do so. Like many others, we continue to look forward to the day that there is a permanent ceasefire in this conflict. The GNWT's commitment to human rights is evident in many pieces of legislation that uphold and protect human rights in the NWT, including the *Human Rights Act* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act*. The GNWT's stance against acts of genocide is evidenced through the work being done under the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Call for Justice.

The GNWT has support in place for those who are experiencing stress and anxiety as a result of the ongoing conflict. Residents are encouraged to reach out to the Community Counselling Program which offers flexible in-person and virtual services for residents when and where they need it, or by calling the 811 NWT Helpline. Responders are registered nurses who are trained professionals that can also assist with concerns in a variety of areas, including stress management, suicidal thoughts, abuse, sexual assault, depression, anxiety, grief, loss, and substance use. This is a service that we provide and is something tangible that can have a positive impact on our residents. Support from the community strengthens families and relationships through times of adversity - particularly in challenging times such as these where ongoing global conflict is impacting so many people worldwide.