

The Facts:

- Canada's foreign aid spending has plunged drastically over the past 10 years.
- Canada was once seen as a balanced voice in Middle East politics. However, under the current government, an evenhanded policy was abandoned. The Conservative Party has been uncritically aligned with Israel's government and its policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This, along with other Conservative policies, has harmed Canada's global reputation, and **cost it a seat** at the United Nations Security Council.
- Canada was **also once seen as a global peacemaker and active player in nation building**, however military and police contributions to UN missions have significantly been reduced to a "trickle" according to a *Toronto Star* investigation.
- Canadian Muslims continue to be unjustly detained abroad with little help from Canadian officials. According to international human rights groups, Canadians unfairly held abroad include Huseyin Celil who has been detained in China since 2006 (his wife and four children are in Toronto). Also held unfairly by a foreign government, Canadian Bashir Makhtal remains in an Ethiopian jail despite years' of assurances of action by the Canadian government. Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy remains in an Egyptian jail despite international calls for the government to secure his release.
- Canadian Omar Khadr, who many legal experts argued should have been treated as a child soldier for his role in the Afghan conflict at the age 15, returned to Canada in 2012. That same year, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Ottawa had violated his constitutional rights by allowing Canadian officials to interrogate him while knowing he had been abused in Guantanamo Bay.



The Issues:

IRAQ & SYRIA:

In response to the international terrorist group ISIS, the Conservative government led Canada to join a military operation against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Canada has contributed close to its fair share of humanitarian aid to Syria, according to Oxfam, but should still do more.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE:

In summer 2014, a military attack was launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip, which remains blockaded by Israel since 2007.

- Over 2,100 Gazans were killed, including over 500 children.
- 66 Israeli soldiers and 5 Israeli civilians were killed.

SAUDI ARABIA:

The Conservative government has facilitated the export of \$15 billion

worth of arms from Canada to Saudi Arabia, despite persistent concerns about Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

IRAN:

The Conservative government suspended diplomatic relations with Iran in September 2012 and expelled Iranian diplomats from Canada. Despite the historic nuclear deal between major world powers and Iran, the Conservative government is maintaining economic sanctions against Iran.

EGYPT:

Canada continues to normalize relations with the Egyptian government, despite widespread human rights violations according to human rights observers. The current Egyptian government took power in a military coup which ousted the democratically-elected government.

The Parties:

Conservatives:

- The Conservatives under Stephen Harper have always expressed "unequivocal support" for Israel and its actions and policies.
- Proposed creating "Banned Travel Zones" to prevent Canadians from participating in conflict zones including Syria and Iraq. This means Canadians travelling for legitimate reasons, including visiting family, or visiting holy shrines, will have to show proof.
- The Conservatives have said little about human rights when conducting trade deals and bilateral discussions with countries like Egypt, China, and others.
- Established an Office of Religious Freedom in 2013; its Ambassador criticized a number of governments for treatment of religious minorities including Myanmar's leaders for the persecution of Muslims.

Liberals:

- During the 2014 Gaza conflict, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau stated: "Israel has the right to defend itself and its people. Hamas is a terrorist organization and must cease its rocket attacks immediately."
- Trudeau has stated that he would pull out Canada's CF-18s and troops out of combat roles against ISIS.
- Trudeau says he would re-engage with Iran to normalize relations, and to reopen Canada's mission in that country.
- Liberals have committed to raising the country's foreign aid spending to 0.7% of GDP.
- The Liberals criticized the Conservative government on the Saudi arms deal and asked for assurances that "there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population."
- Although Omar Khadr was interrogated by Canadian officials under a Liberal government, the Liberals have since criticized the Conservative government for not affording him his rights as a Canadian citizen.





NDP:

- In response to the 2014 Gaza conflict, NDP leader Tom Mulcair stated that: *“New Democrats have long been committed to a policy of supporting peaceful coexistence in viable, independent states with agreed-upon borders, an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, and an end to violence targeting civilians.”*
- Mulcair reiterated this position in the first Leaders’ Debate in August. The NDP has criticized military action against ISIS, suggests focus on preventing financing of foreign groups, as well as preventing the travelling of fighters to war zones.
- NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar said it appears Canada has too cozy a relationship with Saudi Arabia.
- The NDP have not been clear on their position on Iran.
- Has criticized the Conservative government’s handling of the case of Omar Khadr, arguing that he should have been treated as a child soldier, that allegations of torture must be investigated, and that Khadr may deserve compensation.



Green:

- Work to establish a standing international peacekeeping force under UN control.
- Increase foreign aid to 0.7% of GDP.
- Work to increase the influence of the International Court of Justice.
- Advocate a viable and secure state for Palestine and a secure state for Israel.
- Initiate a review of Canada’s current international security alliances.
- Promote and support the international missions of the United Nations.
- Erase debts with emerging countries that have been in default for over ten years.
- Has also criticized the Conservative government’s handling of the case of Omar Khadr, arguing that he should have been treated as a child soldier.

Where do Canadians Stand?

A majority of Canadians polled last spring were opposed to expanding airstrikes to Syria and a majority disapproved of Canadian participation in the bombing mission in Iraq, according to a Forum Poll.

Questions to ask candidates:

- Where do you stand on military action in Iraq and Syria?
- What do you think Canada’s contributions to foreign aid should be?
- How can Canada help bring peace and stability to the Middle East?
- How should Canada ensure that Canadians unjustly detained abroad are returned safely home?
- How should Canada deal with anti-democratic governments, and address human rights abuses in countries Canada wants to do business with?
- Should Canada support the new diplomatic deal to normalize relations with Iran? Why or why not?

The Facts:

- 1-7 people in Canada live in poverty.
- 200,000 people are homeless in a year, costing the Canadian economy \$7 billion annually.
- 3.8 million people, including 1.1 million children experienced food insecurity in 2011.
- Close to 900,000 people rely on food banks each month.
- 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed. Temporary employment has increased by 23% since 1997.
- Over 4 million Canadians struggle to pay the rent, feed their families, and address their basic needs.

The Issues:

- The Conservative government raised the age which seniors qualify for Old Age Security pension to the age of 67, rather than 65.
- 3-4 million people in Canada were poor in 2011. Despite numerous calls for action, Canada has no national plan to reduce and eliminate poverty.
- 50% of health outcomes can be attributed to the social determinants of health. Poverty in childhood can be a greater predictor of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in adults than later life circumstances and behaviour.

The Parties:



Conservatives:

- Have not released a poverty elimination strategy nor an affordable housing strategy. Childcare supports: \$160/ child under age 6. \$60/ child, age 6-17.
- Boost the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors by \$300 million (that is, \$600 more annually for single seniors and \$840 for couples).
- Family Tax-cut (income splitting) which will not benefit low-income Canadians.
- Enhance the Canada Student Loan Program.



Liberals:

- Introduced a Poverty Reduction Strategy, Affordable Housing Framework and the Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund.
- Introduced a Family Care Plan.
- Would gradually expand the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) and create a new Secure Retirement Option.
- Would boost the Guaranteed Income Supplement.
- Would provide a Youth Hiring Incentive for small and medium-sized businesses.
- Would introduce “Canadian Learning Passport” RESP contributions.



NDP:

- Would table legislation that will set goals and targets for poverty reduction and to ensure secure, adequate accessible and affordable housing.
- Would develop a Canada-wide child care and early learning program.
- Would double the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans and improve the Child Tax Benefit.
- Would provide an EI premium rebate for small business.
- Would transfer \$800 million to provinces and territories to lower tuition fee and raise the education tax credit.
- Would invest in First Nations/Métis/Inuit education.



Green:

- Introduce a National Home Care Policy and a National Affordable Housing framework. Would also amend the Charter of Rights to include a right to housing.
- Address poverty through progressive taxation, a guaranteed income, the implementation of a Canadian Index of Wellbeing to monitor progress.
- Put in place a federally funded child care program.
- No taxes on incomes of \$20,000 or less.
- Implement a Nation-wide Employment and Education Initiative For Youth 18-25.
- Would eliminate post-secondary tuition.

Source: Dignity for All