

Minister Joly's Address to the United Nations General Assembly

September 30th, 2024

UN HQ, New York, New York

M. le Président, chers collègues,

C'est un honneur pour moi de prendre la parole devant vous au nom du Canada, et au nom des Canadiens.

Je tiens à souligner que je me joins à vous sur le territoire traditionnel du peuple Lenape [LEN-ah-PAY].

Cette reconnaissance est importante, car aujourd'hui au Canada, nous marquons la Journée nationale de la vérité et de la réconciliation, au cours de laquelle nous reconnaissons et commémorons les peuples autochtones qui nous ont précédé et continuent d'y vivre.

Nous reconnaissons la douleur causée par des décennies d'abus, de négligence et de racisme.

C'est aussi l'occasion pour nous de nous engager à faire mieux et à réparer les erreurs du passé afin d'aller de l'avant, ensemble.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Ours is a country based on the rights and freedoms that are enshrined in our constitutional Charter.

A core reason Canada is a prosperous society - is that beyond offering the freedom **to** pursue a better life for you and your family – it also provides a freedom **from** the barriers that prevent you from enjoying a better life.

Freedom **from** fear, violence, intimidation and discrimination.

Freedoms that foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging.

Freedom that protects the vulnerable and builds stronger communities.

Far too often, though, some of the loudest voices *claiming* to speak for freedom are the ones trying to redefine that word for their own purposes.

They claim freedom as an excuse to do -as they wish- without any regard for the freedom of others.

That is certainly not how we should define freedom.

[PAUSE]

They hide behind the word **to tell us everything is broken,**

to spread disinformation; and

parrot the lines fed to them by those who wish to interfere in our elections and undermine our democracy.

They weaponize the term “freedom” to further marginalize those in the most vulnerable situations,

to justify spreading hate, and

even deny people their right to make choices about their own bodies.

Including limits on reproductive rights.

At the end of the day – through all of the noise – what they really mean to say is: freedom for some – but not for all.

Often, the people who *claim* to speak for freedom are the same people who want the government to decide

who people can love,

who they are, or

even what they can wear.

We see it in our country. We see it around the world.

At the international level we see it when groups or countries declare that international law doesn't apply to them.

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, we see it taken to its extreme – as the Taliban continue to impose inhumane rules against women and girls.

Banning them from being in public so they are invisible,

Robbing young girls of the fundamental right to an education.

How is that respecting human dignity? How is that protecting the best interests of their people?

[PAUSE]

They need to be held accountable.

Last week, Canada joined Australia, Germany and the Netherlands, with the support from 22 other countries, to take steps to hold Afghanistan accountable under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Taliban cannot make international law disappear through simple decrees.

[PAUSE]

Canada is a country that values **freedom from** oppression – not the **freedom to** oppress others.

There should be nothing controversial about protecting human rights - including the dignity of all men and women alike.

[PAUSE]

HAITI

On Haiti, the world cannot sit idly by as people suffer.

La violence des gangs et la corruption incontrôlées en Haïti ont créé une situation catastrophique pour la population, plongée dans une situation d'insécurité profonde où des civils tombent sous les balles et des enfants meurent de faim.

Le Canada maintient depuis toujours que la solution à cette crise doit provenir des Haïtiens, pour le bénéfice des Haïtiens.

À ce titre, le Conseil présidentiel de transition et le gouvernement de transition s'efforcent de rétablir l'ordre, mais ils ne peuvent y arriver seuls.

Le peuple haïtien a besoin d'une mission multinationale de soutien à la sécurité qui travaille conjointement avec la Police nationale d'Haïti non seulement pour aider celle-ci à rétablir l'ordre, mais pour subvenir aux besoins de base de la population.

Voilà pourquoi le Canada a investi plus de 100 millions pour la soutenir.

Le Canada fait sa part.

Nous devons tous démontrer au peuple haïtien que nous n'allons pas les abandonner.

Le Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies doit être clair à cet effet.

Je tiens à remercier la CARICOM et le Kenya pour le rôle essentiel qu'ils jouent dans la réponse à cette crise.

Ensemble, nous pouvons parvenir à une paix et une stabilité durables en Haïti.

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. President,

What continues to happen in the Middle East is an unspeakable tragedy.

Thousands have been killed in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon – including many Canadians.

This is a senseless war that goes against the dignity of human beings.

The suffering – on all sides – must end.

What the world continues to witness is a repeated cycle of violence where civilians pay the heaviest price.

[PAUSE]

Canada is joining those urging Israel and Hezbollah to accept an immediate ceasefire. We need to create space for peace talks and save lives.

[PAUSE]

There **cannot** be war in Lebanon. Full stop.

UN Security council resolutions must be respected.

Families in Southern Lebanon and families in Northern Israel must be able to safely return to their homes.

We have – and always will – insist that civilians be protected, wherever they're from.

[PAUSE]

Next week marks one year since the terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel.

[PAUSE]

Last March, I visited kibbutz Kfar Aza – one of communities attacked on October 7th.

I met Ayalet, a mother grieving her son who was murdered in the attack – he died protecting his fiancée.

Ayalet recounted the terror of that day. The search for loved ones in burned homes.

[PAUSE]

As she spoke about the horrors of October 7th,
we heard the bombs as they landed on Gaza nearby and felt the
ground shudder.

In that moment, the duality of the tragedy befalling the Israeli and
Palestinian people was profound.

It is a moment I will never forget.

The situation in Gaza is inhumane.

The level of suffering is unacceptable. It must stop.

Innocent Palestinians, women and children, cannot pay the price of
defeating Hamas. It must end.

A ceasefire is needed immediately. Hostages must be released.

This requires both sides making real efforts.

[PAUSE]

Mr. President,

For lasting peace, Canada has long advocated for a two-state solution.

We believe both Israelis and Palestinians have the right to exist.

We all know a negotiated agreement is the best chance for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security.

Unfortunately, Hamas, a terrorist organization, continues to operate in Gaza, refuses to release hostages and refuses to lay down its weapons.

Meanwhile, the government of Israel is against the creation of a Palestinian State.

Violence against Palestinians by extremist settlers and expansion of settlements by Israel in the West Bank continue unabated.

This is unacceptable.

[PAUSE]

Canada supports the creation of a Palestinian State.

That is why we are providing security and development support to the Palestinian people.

We will officially recognize the State of Palestine at the right time, when it is most conducive to building a lasting peace, and not necessarily as the last step of a negotiated process.

[PAUSE]

More than anything, this conflict has led to unspeakable pain.

Communities are hurting.

People have the right to protest peacefully. But nobody has the freedom to intimidate others.

Polarization is a problem. Division is real.

We have a collective responsibility to bring people together.

UKRAINE

Mr. President,

It's now been 2 and a half years since Russia launched its illegal invasion of Ukraine.

The human cost continues to grow.

No country has the freedom to invade its neighbor.

There's no freedom to impose your will on others.

This aggression is a blatant violation of the UN Charter.

[PAUSE]

Russia needs to get out of Ukraine now.

[PAUSE]

The Ukrainian people have the right to be free from fear, free from aggression.

They have the right to decide what their **own** future should be.

Mr. President, we all know that if Russia's aggression goes unchecked here – it will continue.

Many countries in the region, and the hemisphere, are wondering if they will be next.

The world must not back down in denouncing this unjustifiable aggression.

Canada will not back down from its support for Ukraine.

[PAUSE]

At the end of October, Canada will host a conference co-organized with Norway and Ukraine on the human dimension of Ukraine's 10-point peace formula.

We will focus on the return of children to their families as well as deported civilians and prisoners of war.

Every one of those affected by this war is entitled to freedom from violence and from being forced from their home.

[PAUSE]

UN REFORM

Monsieur le Président,

Les enjeux dont je viens de parler soulèvent d'immenses défis.

Cette institution a un rôle à jouer pour nous faire cheminer ensemble vers des solutions.

Les détracteurs des Nations Unies lui reprochent d'être incapable de résoudre les problèmes auxquels le monde est présentement confronté.

Encore pire, certains, plus conspirateurs, pensent même que l'ONU est la cause de plusieurs de ces problèmes.

Les uns comme les autres ignorent la réalité et la force de cette organisation.

Les Nations Unies constituent un forum unique, qui nous permet de nous rassembler et de nous parler, sur un pied d'égalité. Pour tenter d'aplanir nos divergences – qui sont parfois profondes - par la discussion et la recherche du consensus.

C'est la raison pour laquelle le Canada a soutenu l'adoption du Pacte pour le futur lors du Sommet pour le futur la semaine dernière.

Le Pacte est un point de départ alors que nous travaillons ensemble à assurer la pérennité de l'organisation.

L'ONU n'est pas une organisation parfaite, c'est vrai, mais le progrès y est possible.

Comme l'a dit le Secrétaire général : « Nous ne pouvons tout simplement pas construire un avenir pour nos petits-enfants avec un système construit par nos grands-parents ». Construisons cet avenir ensemble.

[PAUSE]

Monsieur le Président,

Depuis près de 80 ans, aucune femme n'a occupé le poste de secrétaire général.

C'est inacceptable.

[PAUSE]

La semaine dernière, j'ai eu le grand honneur, avec ma collègue de la Jamaïque, d'accueillir à Toronto une quinzaine de femmes ministres des affaires étrangères des quatre coins du monde.

Notre constat est clair. Le prochain dirigeant de cette illustre institution doit être une femme.

Il est grand temps que l'on puisse dire, de façon honorable, sur cette tribune et à travers le monde : « Madame la Secrétaire générale ».

[PAUSE]

Je vous dirais la même chose pour le poste de président de l'Assemblée générale.

Monsieur le Président, avec tout le respect que vous m'inspirez, j'espère que l'année prochaine, les délégués s'adresseront à Madame la Présidente.

Je sais que nous sommes nombreux et nombreuses à partager ce souhait.

[PAUSE]

Monsieur le Président,

Laissez-moi vous parler de ma mère. Elle sera tellement fière que je parle d'elle aux Nations Unies.

Vous savez, ma mère et ma grand-mère font partie des millions de femmes dans le monde qui ont lutté avec acharnement pour l'égalité des droits.

Elles l'ont fait aux côtés de mères et de grand-mères de bien des gens réunis dans cette enceinte.

Récemment, maman me disait que nous faisons maintenant partie de la « génération de la consolidation ». Elle a bien raison.

[PAUSE]

Being part of our generation means that we need to **consolidate** the gains that have been made over time and fight against those who are trying to roll back this progress.

It also means that we need to continue to fight so that women and girls everywhere have the right to make choices about their own bodies and their own lives.

We see the difference this gap in freedoms creates.

When women are robbed of the right to decide when to have children, they lose out on education and job opportunities.

When women don't have access to safe abortions their lives are put at risk.

When women are denied access to safe contraception and fertility treatments, they lose the power to make choices that have the most profound impacts on their lives.

Attacks on sexual and reproductive health rights are an attack on equality rights. They're an affront to basic dignity.

[PAUSE]

Nous devons toujours avoir le droit de choisir pour nous-mêmes : quels moyens de contraception utilisés, le choix d'avoir recours à l'avortement ou encore à la procréation assistée. Nous, les femmes, avons le droit d'être égale en tout : en éducation, en emploi et en toute autre opportunité.

Nous sommes femmes et fières de l'être.

Jamais nous ne pouvons reculer.

Ensemble, nous devons continuer d'avancer pour nos sœurs, nos filles et nos petites-filles.

[PAUSE]

Mr. President,

Two years ago, I stood here and said countries around the world were faced with a choice.

And we still have that choice today.

We can choose a world where rules can be broken by the powerful – bringing us back to darker times of tension and conflicts.

Or we can choose a world that upholds human rights, opportunities for all, peace and prosperity.

Where people work together to solve problems.

Canada will work with partners to move us beyond this moment of crisis.

A new future is being shaped.

We must not fail.

Thank you. Merci.