

March 4, 2011.

The Hon. Mr. Darrell Dexter,

Premier, Nova Scotia.

Dear Mr. Dexter,

We read with concern the reported news [The chronicle Herald, March 4, 2011] of proposed expanded ties between Nova Scotia and Israel. This report generates serious concern and surprise that an NDP government in Nova Scotia would approve of such special close relations with a government that practices racial discrimination, oppressive illegal occupation of Palestinian land, in defiance of international law and repeated Security Council resolutions. Throughout this illegal occupation, Israeli has been practicing violation of human rights of the Palestinian people, denying them basic human rights, including detention of thousands of prisoners without charge or trial, torture, daily humiliation, demolition of thousands of homes and expropriation of land for the creation of illegal colonies [settlements]. These practices are in defiance of virtually every article of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and accordingly, are identified by international law as war crimes. These crimes are condemned by all international human rights groups, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Israeli human rights groups like B'Tselem.

It is our understanding that we in Canada, especially our government in Nova Scotia, stand with international law and universal human rights. This proposed close relationship with Israel brings no credit to our government and the values we understood we stand by. We plead with you not to indulge in such an activity.

I look forward to your response and discussing this matter with you.

Yours sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.

President, Canada Palestine Association.

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# Israel's ambassador to Canada wants to expand ties with N.S.

By CLARE MELLOR Staff Reporter  
Fri, Mar 4, 2011 -

The Chronicle Herald.

Premier Darrell Dexter might lead a trade mission to Israel this year in an attempt to increase business and research ties between that country and Nova Scotia.

Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, was in Halifax on Thursday for a meeting with Dan O'Connor, Dexter's chief of staff, to discuss the issue.

Ties between the Port of Halifax and the Port of Haifa in Israel, as well as research and commercialization of renewable energy sources, are a few areas of potential joint interest, O'Connor said.

No date has been set for the mission.

"It is still being discussed. (The premier) wants to make sure that it is well prepared and will have good results," O'Connor said.

Earlier Thursday, Ziv told a small lunch gathering in Halifax that Israel is already collaborating with Canada's federal government on three areas of joint interest: renewable energy, water and brain research. The National Research Council of Canada is co-ordinating the projects.

"At the end, Canada is a huge country with so many provinces, so the engagement with the provinces is very important to us as well," Ziv said.

She said she was going "to see how we can expand the relationship between the state of Israel and the province of Nova Scotia."

This is Ziv's third visit to Halifax. She met with the premier during her last visit in November.

"Israel is one of the world's leaders in (research and development) and commercialization of academic work and that is obviously of interest to Nova Scotia, which proportionately has such a large academic community," O'Connor said.

"(It is also) a personal interest of the premier. It is one of the things he saw and learned about when he was in Israel before that has stayed very strongly with him."

In November, the National Research Council hosted a joint technology innovation summit between Canada and Israel in Toronto attended by representatives of universities, industry and government from both countries. A second similar summit is to take place in Israel later this year.

Commenting on recent developments in the Middle East, Ziv said Thursday that Israel has some concerns and is closely watching the situation.

"We will be the first one to be affected if there are negative developments in the region. Egypt is our closest neighbour. . . . We have had a very peaceful and stable relationship with Egypt and a stable region, thanks to Egypt's effect on the region."

Ziv said that Israel "would love to have more democratic neighbours" in the region but it wants "democracy at its fullest" with equal rights for all.

"It is a process that has to be nurtured. The international community has to help this process to take place."