

## **Canadian churches stand behind the United Church, refuse to be intimidated by Israel lobby**

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Friends,

Canada's major Christian churches have firmly rebuffed an attempt by the Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) to vilify the United Church of Canada (UCC), according to a report submitted to the Church's executive council last month.

CIJA had fiercely attacked the United Church after its General Council adopted a strongly worded resolution criticizing Israel. The resolution called on UCC members to avoid buying goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

"The Jewish community is outraged," fumed Shimon Fogel, CIJA's Chief Executive. Fogel then announced that CIJA would withdraw from the national Canada-wide Christian Jewish Consultation unless that body would denounce the UCC action. It also told other Jewish organizations across Canada to likewise boycott any contacts with the UCC.

But the attempt to isolate the UCC did not work. The other Christian churches, including the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches declared their unwillingness to continue the "Christian Jewish dialogue" without the participation of the UCC, Canada's largest protestant Christian denomination.

And, according to church documents, the Canadian Council of Churches is trying to determine whether it is possible to continue the consultation with CIJA at all.

It appears that CIJA's attempt to isolate the UCC has backfired badly. CIJA seems to be the one that is isolated, not only from major Christian institutions, but even from many members of the Jewish community who appear uncomfortable with its extreme stance. In several Canadian cities, Christian Jewish dialogues continue to take place at the local level, despite the CIJA policy.

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