

When Is Civil Disobedience Called For?

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At our recent convention, the delegates of the Christian Heritage Party approved a resolution that acknowledged that there are times when it is appropriate for Canadians to protest injustice and oppression. It wasn't merely a suggestion; it was called a "civil duty." Where do we get the idea that it's a "duty," and why do we support the March for Life but object to violent, ethnically-focused pro-Palestinian protests?

We have stood with Christians in the March for Life and at Life Chain protesting the violent act of wrenching a baby from the womb of its mother. We've applauded Christians praying outside of abortion clinics, even when the state has forbidden it. Some Christians, such as Linda Gibbons and Mary Wagner, have spent considerable time in prison for publicly protesting the murder of pre-born human babies.

Are the "pro-Palestinian" protests something we should be a part of? The distinction between these cases mentioned is not small. It has huge implications for justice.

Our Christian heritage tells us that we must not murder. This is clearly written in the Criminal Code of Canada. When someone murders another person, or attempts to, then they have committed a crime and are punished by the state. This is what we expect of the state.

But what happens when the state commits a crime through unjust laws? Consider the baby, nestled in its mother's womb, suddenly torn to pieces or acid-burned alive. This is the taking of a life, even most abortionists agree that something has died. We disagree on the value of the unborn child and disagree on the right of a mother to end his or her life. Our Christian heritage recognizes that the child is a human being; but Canadian law says, in Section 223¹ of the Criminal Code of Canada, that the child ". . . becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has emerged, in a living state from its mother." When it has changed location—moved the few inches from inside its mother to outside of its mother.

Before this momentous move, the baby is what? An unknown entity? Apparently, the Supreme Court does not know what's been growing inside the mother for nine months. Only when it has fully exited from the body of its mother does the baby receive the recognition that it is a "human being."

The problem is that the baby in the womb already has the full DNA of a unique image-bearer of God. Thus, it is not a rat or cat, it is not a dog or a hog; it is a human being. From the moment of conception, the baby had the DNA of a human being, therefore was biologically a human being. State sanctioned killing of that biological human being is not a righteous law. Where are the voices of the churches calling out in protest to an unrighteous law as we are called to do? We should see massive calls for justice for the unborn as we watch the horrors enacted upon them.

As part of our Christian heritage, we are called on to support the weak and the poor and so stand with our unborn brothers and sisters. We are called to stand with our seniors and infirm. We must stand for the protection of the innocents.

Why then, do we not support the protests for Hamas, especially when we can see the toll in human lives the actions in Gaza have cost? Why are we not joining these pro-Palestinian protests when so many are being killed?

First, we see a difference in tone. These are not peaceful protests designed only to raise awareness. At many of these protests, statements have been made about killing the Jews. The chant “from the river to the sea” is understood to mean the complete extermination of the Jews and the takeover of the land of Israel by those called Palestinians. That is nothing like the peaceful March for Life or even the truckers’ Freedom Convoy of 2022. Acts of violence, threats and calls for the killing of others are not human rights protected by the Charter or by biblical precepts.

We must remember what caused the current war in Gaza—a very unrighteous act on the part of Hamas, which has governed the area since 2007. Hamas soldiers and sympathizers went into Israel, and they murdered, kidnapped, tortured and brutalized unsuspecting people. The enemies of Israel cheered and celebrated on Oct. 7th, 2023. Is cheering the rape and murder of innocents justified? How does that line up with the right in Canada of peaceful protest?

One year later, Hamas still holds Jewish hostages and recently murdered some of the hostages when the Jewish army (IDF) moved in to release them.² Of course, we mourn with the families of those who have died in Gaza. But let’s put this in perspective: around the world, there are around 70 conflicts being fought. Those supporting the pro-Palestinian marches, who have cried out against Israel’s reaction to the Oct. 7 massacre, have not for one minute stood up and protested these other wars that are also killing innocent people.

One thing that has been glaringly missing is any show of repentance from the residents of Gaza for what Hamas terrorists did on their behalf. We saw the celebrations in Palestine and around the world on Oct. 7, but the only outrage on university campuses has been that Israel defended itself after the horrors enacted upon them.

This is where the rubber hits the road on Civil Disobedience; and of course, these are only examples. Should we stand alongside those whose leaders authorized the attack on innocent civilians in Israel—on young people at a party and families in their homes? An act celebrated around the world, including in this clip from Vancouver?³ Can a person help but feel ill at this hateful rhetoric?

Perhaps, if we saw Gaza residents humbling themselves and calling for a national day of repentance for the murderous crimes committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, it might assuage some of the outrage by people around the world. By the time you receive this Communiqué, we will know what kind of events were held to commemorate Oct. 7, 2023. CHP Canada offers sincere condolences to those—in any country—who have lost loved ones or whose loved ones continue to be held hostage. Our condolences go to a nation that had to grapple with this horrific attack and continues to grapple with it one year later.

But we cannot conflate violent, hate-filled rhetoric and destructive acts of vandalism with legitimate civil disobedience for a just cause . . . because the foundation is so different. The one is celebrating and

promoting the destruction of a people; the other is a sacrificial and peaceful plea calling for the protection of innocent human life. There's no comparison.

The foundation of legitimate civil disobedience must be to protest injustice and to resist oppression. It must be carried out peacefully and with biblical moral values in mind. It must be in accordance with God's principles and in obedience to His call.

We invite you to our website⁴ to learn more about the Christian Heritage Party of Canada.

Footnotes

¹ laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-35.html#docCont

² www.timesofisrael.com/bodies-of-6-hostages-murdered-by-hamas-just-days-earlier-found-in-rafah-idf/

³ www.jpost.com/international/islamic-terrorism/article-804529

⁴ www.chp.ca/

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