



Media Release

Prominent Australians Call on Australian Government to support Palestinian Statehood

Tuesday September 27, 2011. Rev Jim Barr, President of the recently-formed Palestinian advocacy group Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) has warned that Australia will be turning its back on peace in the Middle East if it fails to support Palestine's bid for recognition as a State.

"If Australia wishes to help end the impasse between Israel and the Palestinians, it must vote 'Yes' to Palestinian statehood and urge Israel to return to peace talks in good faith", said Rev Barr.

Today, APAN released a statement signed by prominent and concerned Australians calling on the Australian government to support the Palestinian President's submission to the United Nations for recognition of Palestinian Statehood.

Among the signatories to the statement are former Prime Minister **Malcolm Fraser**, former NSW Attorney-General **John Dowd** and two former Ambassadors to Israel.

Other signatories include church leaders, senior academics, former diplomats, human rights advocates, business leaders and serving federal parliamentarians.

The APAN President said "Australia has long supported a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The time has come for Australia to support the establishment of the Palestinian state."

"Australian support for Palestinian statehood should not be conditional upon a negotiated outcome of peace talks which Israel has disrupted through its continued construction of illegal settlements on Palestinian land".

Rev Barr said that international recognition of Palestinian statehood would add pressure upon Israel to halt its settlements construction in the West Bank and return to the negotiating table with Palestine as an equal partner.

As a newly created national network of human rights and pro-Palestinian groups around Australia, Rev Barr said APAN would bring objectivity and balance to the debate in Australia on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

APAN, he said, represented the voice of growing numbers of Australians concerned to see a just and lasting peace established in the Middle East without further delay.

Rev Barr paid tribute to those who had joined with APAN to sign the statement and said "Increasing numbers of Australians believe Israel must end its occupation and blockade of Palestinian territory and the daily violation of Palestinian human rights."

Issued by Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) www.apan.org.au

For further information contact APAN President Rev James Barr on 0425 462 277