

Australia should not welcome the Prime Minister of Israel

We strongly oppose the official visit to Australia of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel continues to defy all United Nations calls for it to comply with international law in respect of its illegal settlement building, and its treatment of the indigenous Palestinian population.

Instead, over the last 50 years, Israel has held the people of Palestine under military occupation and:

- continues to illegally build settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;
- continues to confiscate Palestinian land;
- continues to demolish Palestinian homes;
- continues its policy of imprisonment of Palestinians without trial even of children as young as 12; and
- continues its blockade of the 1.8 million civilian inhabitants of Gaza.

Those actions are not symbolic of a nation desirous of building peace with its neighbours. Those policies build understandable resentment, anger and desperation amongst Palestinians.

We want all Israelis and Palestinians to have peace and freedom; we oppose all forms of terrorism and criminal violence by either side. We recognise when there is a gross imbalance of power, conflict will never be resolved. Mr Netanyahu's policies consistently aim to provoke, intimidate and oppress the Palestinian population which increase that imbalance, thus taking Israel irretrievably further from peace. These policies are inconsistent with Australian values and beliefs and we should not welcome him here.

The Australian Government needs to rethink its one-sided support for the Israeli Government. We are appalled that our Government opposes the recent UN Security Council resolution supporting the application of international law to Israel and Palestine, when most nations, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France and New Zealand, support it. Even the USA did not oppose it. It is time for the suffering of the Palestinian people to stop and for Australia to take a more balanced role in supporting the application of international law and not supporting Mr Netanyahu and his policies.

Signatories

Gavan Griffith QC, former Solicitor General

The Honourable Murray Rutledge Wilcox, AO, QC, former Federal Court Judge

Julian Burnside AO, QC

John Karkar QC

Paul Heywood Smith QC

Claire O'Connor SC

Janet Holmes-à-Court, AC

Jon Stanhope, ACT Chief Minister 2001-2011

Dr Susan Carland

Bruce Haigh, former Australian diplomat

The Hon Alan Griffin, former Labor Minister

The Hon Melissa Parke, former federal member for Fremantle and lawyer for the United Nations in Gaza

Jill Hall, Former member for Shortland

Laurie Ferguson, Former member for Werriwa

Hon. Sandra Kanck, Former Member of the South Australian Legislative Council

Khodr Saleh, former Deputy Mayor of Canterbury

Ms Miriam Margolyes OBE, Actor

Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah, Writer and academic

Sara Dowse, Writer

Mr Luke Roberts MFA, senior artist

Samah Sabawi, Author, Playwright and PhD candidate Victoria University

Pat Power, Former Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn

Bishop George Browning, Former Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, APAN President

Rev Gregor Henderson AM, Past President, Uniting Church in Australia

Associate Professor Peter Slezak, Independent Australian Jewish Voices

Dr Peter Manning, journalist, academic and author

Emeritus Professor Stuart Rees AM, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

Ms Wendy Turner, Founding and Executive member of Australia Palestine Advocacy Network

Professor Bassam Dally, The University of Adelaide

Professor Mohamad Abdalla, University of South Australia

Jo Jordan, Presiding Clerk, for The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Christina Wilcox, filmmaker

Sara Saleh, media commentator and human rights activist

Dr Jacinda Woodhead, Editor, *Overland* magazine

Michael Brull, New Matilda columnist

Associate Professor Halim Rane, Griffith University

Dr Marcelo Svirsky, Senior Lecturer, University of Wollongong

Associate Professor Deborah Zion

Associate Professor Barbara Baird, Flinders University

Associate Professor Jake Lynch, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

Professor Terri-ann White, The University of Western Australia

Professor John Langmore, University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Ahmad Shboul AM, University of Sydney

David Zyngier, Senior Lecturer, Monash University

Venerable Dr Erica Mathieson, Anglican Archdeacon of North Canberra

Hana Assafiri, Restaurateur and social justice advocate

Sister Susan Connelly, Member, Sisters of St Joseph

Father Claude Mostowik MSC, President Pax Christi Australia

Revd James Barr, Past Moderator, Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion in Victoria

Ibrahim Ayshan, President, General Union of Palestinian Workers- Australia

Rev Harry Kerr, Convenor, Pax Christi Victoria

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Arab, Clinical Psychologist

Issa Shaweesh, businessman

David Forde, Pride of Australia Medal 2014

Dr Kevin Bray, Chair, Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine

Harry Wallace, Director, Major Issues and Theology Foundation

Annette Brownlie, Chair, Just Peace Qld Inc.

Helen Rainger, President, Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network

Nasser Mashni, Australians for Palestine

Hilmi Dabbagh, Coordinator, Australian Palestinian Professionals Network

Assoc Prof Jon Jureidini Vice President Australian Friends of Palestine Association

Dr Vacy Vlazna, Coordinator, Justice for Palestine Matters

Cathy Peters, Convenor, Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine

Jamil Batshoun- President, The Australian Palestinian Club

Bashir Sawalha, President of Australian Palestinian Graduates Club