

2 August 2014

Dear Member of Parliament

We, the undersigned organizations, community groups and societies, congratulate both the federal government and the opposition for securing UNSC action regarding the terrorist attack on the flight MH17 over the Ukraine. Hopefully this will result in justice and a form of closure for the families involved.

When juxtaposing the Australian official response of the events in Ukraine with that having occurred in Palestine over the recent weeks, we have to say we are deeply saddened and distressed at the reaction or complete lack thereof from members of our government and the opposition. To those who signed and supported Ms Melissa Parkes' Australian parliamentarians' statement calling for an end to the Gaza hostilities, we wish to congratulate you for taking the stance that will see you on the right side of history in the years to come.

In the past weeks, the world has been witness to the deliberate, brutal killing of innocent women and children and the wanton decimation of the Gaza region. It has drawn widespread condemnation from governments all over the world. Yet Australia, in particular, has not denounced this massacre. There is no mention of the disproportionate nature of Israeli defence (if indeed that was the intention) against Palestinians. Rather, we continue to hear the equivocation of these atrocities in support of Israel's right to defend itself. The bombing of hospitals and schools and other civilian targets by the Israeli military shows the punitive nature of the occupying force and blatant disregard for Palestinian civil society.

At the time of preparing this letter, the death toll numbers more than 1000 innocent civilians, 5,000 injured and 200,000 homeless. The indiscriminate bombings create an open air prison from which there is no escape. ***The fact that this is not condemned by our politicians, in some way leads us to believe that they do not value the lives of Palestinians as they do those of Israelis.***

As Australia is a member of the UN Security Council and a signatory to the Geneva Convention, you will be well aware of Israel's belligerence and violations of International Law. For your benefit, we have outlined below some of their more notable transgressions in the face of the International community;

1. Violation of customary law, human rights norms (A/RES/194/III, § 11 and customary IHL as codified by the ICRC in 2005, Rule 132, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Art. 12(2)) by prohibiting the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes.
2. Violation of the Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions requiring Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territory (87 resolutions to this day) and the UN Charter which obliges the Member States to "carry out the decisions of the Security Council" (Art. 25).
3. Violation of the Palestinian people's right to their natural resources and wealth through the use of Palestinian agricultural land by Israel; the exploitation of Palestinian water reserves and preventing Palestinian access to more than 10% of their safe drinking water reserves (A/RES/64/292).
4. The establishment of Israeli settlements (4th 1949 Geneva Convention (GC), Art. 49 and 147); the expulsions of Palestinians from their territory (id.);
5. The demolitions and expropriations of Arab houses and lands situated in the occupied country (1907 Hague Regulations, Art. 46 and 55);
6. Military attacks against civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against Gaza and Palestinian refugees camps (customary international humanitarian law, ICRC Compendium Rules 1 and 14);
7. The current blockade which has lasted from 2007 to the present (RES 242/1860).
8. A United Nations Relief and Works Agency report of 2012 concludes that unless remedial action is taken, Gaza will be unliveable by 2020.

It is important to note that some of these violations have been committed persistently for more than 40 years and there has been no UN action against Israel to stop this defiance other than what seems to be resolute tokenism

We draw your attention to items 3 and 8.

In light of this, we fail to understand why members of the government and the opposition do not take a stronger position in condemning the aimless killing. We fail to understand why you would support the annexing of another country's land, water and agricultural resources and allow it to continue unquestioningly. We fail to understand how anyone can sit idly by and watch innocent children and women die and not condemn it. Where is the justice and the humanity in this?

Under the International Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as set out by the set the United Nations on December 9, 1948 in the General Assembly Resolution 260A (III) Article 2 they define it thus;

In the present convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

We ask you to speak out, not in support of one party over the other but in support of the UN resolutions that have been drafted in this matter. We ask you to speak out in support of human rights.

Some of the members of the undersigned organizations may live in your constituency, others have family members living in this part of the world, but ALL are united along with many millions across the world, in the belief that a great injustice is being perpetrated with little or no condemnation from our political representatives. It is therefore important for them to know your stance on this issue.

We have attached a list of questions which we respectfully ask you to respond to, as well as to the issues we have raised in this letter. Your response will be forwarded to the respective organizations informing them of your position on the matter. In the event you do not reply, we will take it that you do not consider this matter deserving of your consideration.

In light of the urgency of the matter, we look forward to your response by 8 August 2014.

Regards

Al Kauther Institute

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AussieMuslims.NET

Australian Muslim Advocates for the Rights of All Humanity (AMARAH)

Australian Muslim Times

Brisbane Islamic Centre

Council of Imams QLD (CIQ)

Crescents Community News (CCN)

Crescents of Brisbane

FAMSY OLD

Indonesian Islamic Society of Brisbane (IISB) Inc

Islamic Council of Queensland

Islamic Council of Western Australia (ICWA)

Islamic Educational Trust of Queensland

Islamic Medical Association of QLD

Islamic Multicultural Association of the Gold Coast

Islamic Shia Council of Qld

Islamic Society of Eight Mile Plains (Eight Mile Plains Mosque)

Islamic Society of Gold Coast (Gold Coast Mosque)

Islamic Society of Holland Park (Holland Park Mosque)

Islamic Society of Ipswich (Ipswich Mosque)

Islamic Society of Logan (Logan Mosque)

Islamic Society of Toowoomba (Garden City Mosque)
Kuraby Mosque (Masjid Al-Farooq)
Muslim Business Network
Muslim Charitable Foundation
Muslim Funeral Services
Muslim Legal Network (MLN)
Muslim Theological Council of Western Australia
Pakistan Australian Cultural Association
Queensland Muslims Historical Society
Sister's House
Slacks Creek Mosque
WA Muslim Lawyers Association
Worongary Mosque