



AFIC Urges Aus. Government to Prohibit Citizens from Foreign Military Service Amid Legal and Ethical Concerns

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The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) calls on the government to ensure it is meeting its obligations, to *protect Australian lives* and ensure that Australians do not undertake acts that are potentially considered contraventions of international law.

Today we have learnt that an Australian has been killed while fighting on behalf of the Israeli Defence Force. As concisely pointed out by the Perth International Law Journal, published by the UWA International Law Society on 1 May 2022.

'Volunteering to fight for a foreign military appears to be legal under both international and Australian domestic law. However, legal uncertainty and a lack of precedent creates a large risk of criminal liability to individuals seeking to fight abroad.'

In consideration of the unclear, if not obvious, ongoing human rights violations being perpetrated in Gaza, *the Australian Government should immediately ban all Australians from fighting for non-Australian forces anywhere around the world*. This would ensure that Australians are not embroiled in possible war crimes and illegal acts, ensuring Australia's obligations to protect lives and prevent atrocities.

This ambiguity has resulted in the Coalition today calling for parts of Lebanon to be made exclusion zones rather than asking and demanding an inquiry as to *why and who is responsible for Australians and a resident being killed in Lebanon*. It appears the Coalition is more interested in dog whistle politics than showing genuine interest in protecting Australians.

In November 2016, the Sydney Morning Herald reported, 'Former Liberal leader John Hewson has accused the Coalition of "cheap political arse-covering" over attempts to link Malcolm Fraser's 1970s immigration policies to criminal gang activity and Islamic radicalisation in Australia today.'

The Coalition's intent is clearly shown again. Any attempt to limit freedom of movement, family connections, or humanitarian support to any people of Lebanese descent must be carefully considered, and this suggestion by the Coalition is irresponsible. They have stated that since there is little to no evidence of people fighting for a prescribed organisation, they *again want to shift the onus of proof*, making anyone who travels there criminally liable, a position that AFIC does not accept.

'Any moves to impact Lebanese people will be the first steps of a slippery slope that will only cause more hardship and seek to fracture our multicultural society.' Said Dr Rateb Jneid. President of AFIC.

Authorised:

Dr Rateb Jneid
President of AFIC