



A Call for International Accountability and Australian Government Support of the South African Legal Action

Monday 8th January, 2024

“The past weeks have witnessed unprecedented action by members of civil society across the world against the injustice of Israel's disproportionately brutal response to the firing of missiles from Palestine.

If you add together all the people who gathered over the past weekend to demand justice in Israel and Palestine in Cape Town, Washington, D.C., New York, New Delhi, London, Dublin and Sydney, and all the other cities this was arguably the largest active outcry by citizens around a single cause ever in the history of the world.

Violence begets violence and hatred; that only begets more violence and hatred. We South Africans know about violence and hatred. We understand the pain of being the polecat of the world when it seems that nobody understands or is even willing to listen to our perspective. It is where we come from.”

- *The Late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, August 2019*

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) and its over 155 members have called on the Australian Government to ensure the rule of law prevails, advocating for international observers to be sent to Gaza to uncover the ground realities. Australia, as a responsible member of the global community, must act immediately to halt the bloodshed.

As echoes of violence and hatred reverberate across time. Having endured their struggles, South Africans empathise with the pain of being misunderstood and unheard on the global stage, as eloquently expressed by the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2019. The sentiment was underscored by the late President Nelson Mandela, who in 1997 emphasised that true freedom could not be achieved until the Palestinians were free.

Survivors of heinous atrocities, human rights abuses, and apartheid, recognising the gravity of the situation, have decried the ongoing atrocities against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza. The international community must acknowledge the urgency of the matter and, as South Africa has dared proclaim, Enough is Enough.

It is imperative to realise that Israel's current actions are not isolated incidents but part of a consistent pattern aimed at the destruction of the resilient Palestinian population.

Referring Israel to the International Criminal Court for Genocide is an essential step to bring the facts to light and expose the truth on a global stage.

Many reports and complaints can be cited, but the apparent deliberate actions of silencing the truth must be highlighted. The killing of journalists and their families in Gaza has been sickening. Around 60 journalists have been killed in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Not a first, there have been numerous complaints filed by Reporters Without Borders since 2018. Israel has evaded accountability, exploiting technicalities, declaring Palestine is not a state and cannot bring the complaint to bear. Targeting journalists is a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute.

Additionally, the international community must not turn a blind eye to the explicit intentions declared by Israeli officials, who openly articulate their focus on obliterating Gaza at any cost, as evidenced by statements from Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. “This will be a long, tough war. It has costs, heavy costs, but its justification is the highest that can be” (as reported by Jamie Dettmer POLITICO, 29/12/2023). The costs appear to be the genocide of Palestinians and justification for ethnic cleansing. The same article cites numerous sources from nearly all spectrums that there is no will in Israel for a two-state solution and no equality for Palestinians.

On 4 January 2024, in an interview with the British Journalist Iain Dale on LBC Radio, the Israeli Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely to the UK claimed, ‘Palestinian children are taught that they can kill Jews... One of the things we realize is that every school, every mosque, every second house has access to these tunnels.’

‘The world has yet to see this evidence, and there are more than 22,000 dead and more than 10,000 missing.’ Said Dr Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC, ‘It is impossible to see how the blood of so many people, innocent children, will ever lead to peace. How many more lives will it take to satiate the blood lust of Netanyahu? How many more lives will it take for the world powers to take action.’ He concluded.

On 7 January 2024, amidst the bloodshed, the Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahyu said on Israeli Radio 103FM (as reported in the Middle East Monitor) that Israel “must find ways for Gazans that are more painful than death.”

It is hard to find any redeeming position from the Israelis in this war; the words lead us with no ambiguity as to Israel’s intentions. Why does the world not hold them to the same accountability as the rest of the world?

The world must hold Israel accountable for its actions, given its possession of one of the world's most powerful armies, built on international support. The Global community's inaction has cost countless lives and misery and ignored the desperate pleas from humanitarian agencies such as Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, Oxfam, and the United Nations.

With our members, we call on the Australian Government to ensure the rule of law prevails. As a responsible member of the global community, we must act immediately to halt the bloodshed.

‘Australia has a moral obligation to prevent genocide; it has a moral obligation to align itself with the actions of the South African Government, to bring out the truth of what is happening in Gaza and to prioritise law over war.’ Dr Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC stated.

AFIC and its members continue to call on the release of all hostages and those held without charge in Israeli jails.

All segments of Australian society must hold Israeli politicians accountable for their words and actions. The time for decisive international action and Australian leadership is now, as we stand united against injustice, violence, and the violation of human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Authorised:

Dr Rateb Jneid
President of AFIC



Members

Islamic Council of ACT
Islamic Council Christmas Island
The United Muslim Council of NSW
Islamic Council of NT
Islamic Council of Queensland
Islamic Council of SA
Tasmanian Muslim Association
Islamic Council of Victoria
Islamic Council of WA
Arab-Australian Friendship Society
Bosnian United Society of ACT Inc.
Young Muslims Association Inc.
Australian Turkish Friendship Association
ABH Islamic Society GHB Penshurst
Central Coast Islamic Society
Western Sydney Islamic Society
Elminia Islamic Youth Centre
Bebnine Akar District Charity Association
Parramatta Islamic Cultural Assn
Sydney Islamic Community Welfare
Australian Beirut Charitable Association
Bayt Zakat Charity Inc.
IAAL Charitable Association
Syria Relief Incorporated
The Islamic Friendship Association of Australia
Al Minia Charitable Association
Canterbury Islamic Society
The Australian Islamic House in Liverpool
Lebanese Unity Association
Tripoli Fayhaa Muslim Association Inc
El Dunnieh Sons Charity Association
Assalah Islamic Association
Alebdaa Islamic Association
Islamic Peace Association
Jordanian Hub
Al Salaam Islamic Society of NSW Inc
Islah Zat Al Bayn for Reconciliation Inc
the United Arab Moslem Association
Islamic Society of Alice Spring
Islamic Society of Darwin
Islamic Society of Palmerston
Bosniak Islamic Centre of Qld
Islamic Society of Algester
Islamic Society of Central Queensland
Islamic Society of Darra
Islamic Society of Gold Coast
Islamic Society of Holland Park
Islamic Society of Mareeba
Islamic Society of Westend
Islamic Society of Toowoomba
Islamic Society of Mackay
Islamic Society of Ipswich
Islamic Society of Logan City
Islamic Society of Durack
Darul Uloom Academy
Sisters with Helping Hands Inc
Townsville Islamic Society
Islamic Society of Gladstone
Bosniak's Association of South Australia
Murray Bridge Islamic Cultural Education Society
Islamic Association of Virginia
The Eritrean Islamic Society of Adelaide Inc
Sudanese Cultural and Social Society of SA

The Islamic Outreach Assn of South Australia
Somali Communities Council Inc
Muslim Youth of SA
Eritrean Muslim Community in SA
The Islamic Cultural Development Centre of Australia
The African Muslim Association of South Australia
Islamic Community Australia Inc
Adelaide Malay Association Inc
Somali Juba and Gedo Community Association Inc
Somali United Community Association of South Australia Inc
Eritrean and Ethiopian Youth of Adelaide Inc
Al-Furqan Cultural Association of South Australia Inc
Adelaide United Families Inc
Tasmanian Muslim Association
Albanian Australian Islamic Society
Ararat Islamic Welfare Association
United Muslim Migrant Association
Werribee Islamic Centre Limited
Islamic Association of Monash Mosque
United Imams & Duat
United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia
Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc
Light of Hidayah Inc
Australian Middle Eastern Council Inc.
Alnajat Association of Australia
Akkar Association of Australia
Al Amin Islamic Association Victoria Inc
Integrity Islamic Society of Australia
Islamic Womens Council of Australia Inc.
Mazraat Balde Australia Inc
Australian Women Rights Association
Australian Human Rights Association Inc
Victorian Kuredish Associaiton Inc
Muslim Youth Centre Victoria Inc
Australian Future Women's Movement Inc
Alsalaam Islamic Associaiton of Victoria Inc
The Arabic Community Association of Victoria Inc
Muslim Women Welfare of Victoria Inc
Islamic Association of Katanning
Noorul Islam Society
Muslim Charity Community of WA Inc
Kalgoorlie Islamic Centre
Persutuan Isam Pulu Cocos
Muslims WA Inc
Madrash Shiarul Islam Inc
The Arabic Community Association of WA
United Australian Islamic Association Inc.
Muslim Women Welfare & Advocacy WA Inc
Smile of Hope
Muslim Youth Support Centre
International Humanitarian Aid Inc
Muslim Defence League Inc
Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah Inc
Furqan Islamic Association of WA
Muslim Public Affairs Council
Al Salam Islamic Society of WA
Peace Univeral Society
Freemantle District Islamic Association Inc
Lebanese Australian Association Inc.
Muslim Prison Welfare and Advocacy of Western Australia Inc
Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network INC.
United Muslims Of Western Australia INC.
Perth United Soccer Club