



# AFIC Urges Swift Reconsideration of Humanitarian Aid Suspension to Gaza

Monday 29th January, 2024

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), representing Muslim organisation across Australia, has issued an urgent appeal to the Honourable Senator Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate, urging the immediate reconsideration of Australia's decision to suspend humanitarian funding to Gaza.

In alignment with the condemnation expressed by UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, AFIC deems this decision as "catastrophic" and "utterly irresponsible & immoral." Reacting with severity to allegations against 13 individuals within a workforce exceeding 13,000 is perplexing and demands immediate review.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a crucial role in providing essential services, including emergency relief, to the people of Gaza. The suspension of aid, particularly in a region already facing numerous challenges, poses a serious threat to the well-being of Gazan civilians. AFIC implores the Minister to explore alternative measures ensuring the continuation of vital humanitarian assistance.

'We see a double standard whilst an allegation can be made that creates a swift response from Australian Government, but a plausible case of the heinous crime of genocide made in the International Court of Justice last Friday is met with silence' said Dr Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC. Highlighting a concerning double standard in international affairs, "The ICJ called for aid to be delivered to innocent Palestinian and the Australian Government responds to this by cutting aid' he continued.

AFIC asserts that Australia must take decisive measures to prevent genocide, advocate for the prosecution of breaches of international law, and impose sanctions against Israel if immediate compliance is not achieved. In line with this, AFIC recently called on the government to prohibit Australians from fighting for non-Australian forces.

The organisation reaffirms the sanctity of all life, urging an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages held without charge, and the deployment of independent monitors to document facts on the ground.

Minister Wong, AFIC implores the Australian government to uphold its commitment to justice and human rights. The suspension of aid to Gaza demands an immediate and comprehensive reconsideration. The well-being of innocent civilians should be our paramount concern, and AFIC appeals for a fair, compassionate, and resolute review of this decision.

AFIC, established in 1964, stands as the Peak Muslim Organisation in Australia, with a rich history of pioneering numerous community services and actively advocating for the rights and representation of the Muslim community.

**Authorised:**

Dr Rateb Jneid  
President of AFIC