



Australian Federation
of Islamic Councils

Upholding the Right to Free Speech and Supporting Hash Tayeh

Wednesday, 12th March, 2025

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) expresses its grave concern for, and solidarity with, Palestinian-Australian businessman and activist, Hash Tayeh, who faces charges under laws that have historically not been used to curtail political speech. This marks a potentially unprecedented use of the 'insulting' aspect of these laws, threatening to drastically limit public discourse and the right to political protest in Australia.

These legal actions are deeply troubling, as they utilise statutes in ways that could severely impact freedom of expression, particularly concerning criticisms of political ideologies such as Zionism. AFIC stresses that criticisms of Zionism — a political stance — should not be conflated with antisemitism, a form of racial hatred. The distinction is crucial for maintaining a just and open society where political dialogue thrives.

AFIC reiterates its support for Mr. Tayeh, whose case represents a concerning move towards stifling legitimate political expression under the guise of preventing insult. Such a broad application of these laws could set a dangerous precedent for suppressing public activism and discourse on significant human rights issues.

Dr. Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC, asserts, "We must remain vigilant against any attempts to suppress necessary and legitimate political expression through legal or political means. The charges against Mr. Tayeh not only threaten his personal freedoms but signal potential risks for all advocates and critics of government policies and political ideologies."

In closing, AFIC calls upon all Australians, particularly those who value civil liberties and the right to free speech, to stand in solidarity with Hash Tayeh. We urge the community to support actions and calls for justice in his case and to defend the broader principles of free expression and political engagement.

Authorised by
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