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From: Lynette Chamas [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 28 February 2017 3:20 PM
To: White Paper
Subject: Middle East Foreign Policy

Herewith please find my submission to the Dept of Foreign Affairs.

As of the end of 2011, polls taken by private polling companies with established reputations in the specialist field (e.g. Roy Morgan, McNair etc) showed that:

- 68% of Australians think Israel has a “negative influence” on the world (BBC, 2007)
- 63% of Australians do not support Israeli settlements on Palestinian land (Morgan, 2011)
- 61% think the UN should admit Palestine as a member state (Morgan, 2011)
- 51% think Australia should vote “yes” to Palestine’s UN admission (Morgan 2011)
- A mere 5% of Australians thought the then-government (Labor) supported the Palestinians (Morgan 2011).

These figures have increased considerably since the attack by Israel on Gaza in 2014. That action, and Israel’s recent law allowing the building of settlements on privately owned Palesinian land, have been internationally condemned and have garnered greatly increased support for the Palestinian people - and more opposition to the Israeli government - both in Australia and abroad.

In stridently supporting Israel, and inviting to our shores a man regarded by many in the international community as a war criminal, the Australian government has shown itself indifferent to the opinion of the Australian people whom it purports to represent.

The government was elected to represent the views of the majority of Australians on the world stage, rather than peddling its own biased agenda. It should be standing with the international community in calling for an end to illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land and an end to the siege of Gaza, described by a member of the Vatican as “the world’s largest open-air prison”. The UN has stated that Gaza will not be fit for human habitation in 2020.

The Australian Government should be using all its auspices to pressure Israel into stopping its seizure of privately owned Palestinian land, stopping its illegal settlement building, lifting its seize of Gaza and restoring full human rights to the Palestinian people.

I note that the Foreign Minister has stated that she does not regard the settlements being built on Palestinian land as illegal. I find it extraordinary that a person in a senior governmental position should be so totally ignorant of the Geneva Convention, as to be unaware of Clause 4 which states that no occupying power may build permanently on land seized during a military occupation. Perhaps the Foreign Minister could apprise herself more thoroughly of the law by which the international community recently came to condemn Israel for its settlment activity.

This government should adopt a foreign policy towards Palestine that is unbiased, fair-minded, in line with the international community and the rule of international law, and which represents the opinions of the majority of the people of this country.

The movement towards a just and viable Palestinian state is gaining momentum and cannot be stopped. Its outcome in favour of the Palestinians may take some time, but is inevitable. Australia

must not be seen to be opposing this outcome because of petty party politics. There is no honour in being on the wrong side of history

Lynette Chamas

