



8 November 2018

Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers to urge the government not to go ahead with moving the Australian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Ever since the creation of Israel, Quakers around the world have sought ways to build a peaceful agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Through regular contacts with people in the region, and the ongoing presence of a Quaker Meeting in Ramallah, we have heard the calls from those suffering under the occupation, and from those Israelis who wish to see an end to the conflict by nonviolent means. A number of our Australian Quakers have participated in programs of the World Council of Churches and other agencies to support those working for relief, development and human rights.

We find it puzzling that, in your media statement on 16 October, you suggested that moving the embassy would not prejudice the long-term position of Jerusalem as capital of two states. You did not offer any explanation as to how this would work, given that the status of Jerusalem remains one of the main points for any negotiation of a two-state solution. A pre-emptive move to recognise one side's plans for the city will set back the process. It would also be in defiance of the UN General Assembly resolution in December 2017 (128 in favour, 9 against, 35 abstentions including Australia) calling on nations not to establish diplomatic missions in Jerusalem. The negative response from Arab ambassadors in Canberra, and the alarm expressed by Indonesian government ministers, add weight to calls from many quarters to review the government's approach.

We believe Australia can take more active steps, with others in the international community (especially through the United Nations), to help rebuild confidence within the Israel-Palestine region. This would then set the basis that will enable discussions to resume towards a long-term peaceful and just outcome for all the people of the region. We hope that the government can work with the other Australian political parties in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Jordan".

Jo Jordan
Presiding Clerk
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Australia Yearly Meeting

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