

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**US GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS UNDERMINES MOVES FOR PEACE**

Australian Quakers join with many people around the world in expressing deep concern at the announcement by the US Government that “the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law”. This statement stands in direct conflict with repeated UN resolutions, and the Fourth Geneva Convention, in that the development and spread of the settlements has consistently been held to be against international law. Furthermore, the UN Fact Finding Mission on Israeli settlements (2012-13) found “a multitude of the human rights of the Palestinians are violated in various forms and ways owing to the existence of the settlements”.

Ann Zubrick, Presiding Clerk of Australian Quakers, says that “the Australian Government should support the peace process in Israel-Palestine by making clear to the US Administration that its comments are undermining the prospects for a just and lasting peace in the region”. She says further that “Australia should make it clear that it opposes any further construction of settlements, and encourages further negotiations towards ending the occupation of Palestinian land”.

Over the years Quakers around the world have sought ways to support the people of Israel-Palestine to reach a peaceful political solution, so that all those living there can look forward to a positive and harmonious future. Quakers in Ramallah have spent years building links among people on all sides, and other Quakers from elsewhere including Australia have taken part in dialogue and accompaniment programs in the region. We will continue our efforts to achieve justice and peace there. (Photo of Ann Zubrick by Elizabeth PO')

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