

15 November 2013

Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Minister

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers. We seek to promote nonviolent means to achieve peace and justice in all areas of life.

Over many years, Quakers from many parts of the world (including Australia) have been active in working for a fair outcome for the people of the Middle East, notably in Israel/Palestine.

We hope that the Government will **respond** to the forthcoming United Nations resolutions against the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with a clear statement of its commitment to a just solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Australia has regularly supported UN resolutions declaring that the settlements are illegal, and that the Geneva Convention prohibiting the transfer of populations to occupied territories applies to the settlements.

It has been disturbing to note some recent statements by Israeli leaders that further efforts will be made to alienate the Jordan Valley from the Palestinian West Bank, and that there is no place for Palestinians in historic Israel.

On the other hand, media reports this week suggest that the Israeli Government has deferred the establishment of more settlements in the West Bank following international and Palestinian concern, and to give it more influence on international decisions about Iran. This indicates that it is aware of the growing feeling around the world that the policies of expanding settlements are unjust and detrimental to the prospects for peace with the Palestinians.

We hope the Government will (a) make clear that it opposes the settlements as an impediment to a negotiated peace in the region, and (b) increase its own efforts to support constructive peace proposals.

In peace

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Julian Robertson
Presiding Clerk
Australia Yearly Meeting

Australia Yearly Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.
Incorporated in the ACT
PO Box 556 Kenmore
Queensland 4069
Australia

Tel (07) 3201 2685
Email ymsecretary@quakers.org.au
Web www.quakers.org.au
ABN 16 036 715 933