

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

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יהודי אוסטרליה

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MEDIA RELEASE

The President of the ECAJ, Robert Goot, today welcomed Australia's principled stand in voting against two resolutions in the Fourth Committee of the UN relating to alleged Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people. Australia opposed these resolutions on the grounds that they were one sided and failed to take into account Israel's legitimate security concerns and did not reflect adequately the responsibility of Palestinians to end attacks targeted at Israeli civilians.

The ECAJ also appreciates and applauds Australia's opposition to any attempts to bind Israel to the International Court of Justice's contentious and non-binding advisory opinion on the security barrier. The ECAJ supports the Australian view that resolutions referring to the ICJ advisory opinion should reflect its non-binding character and should give due regard to Israel's legitimate security concerns. Australia's continuing support of Israel's right to take measures in self-defence which are discriminating and proportionate, consistent with applicable international law, is also to be applauded.

However the ECAJ was disappointed and concerned that Australia supported two other Fourth Committee resolutions: declaring that the Geneva Conventions are applicable to the occupied territories; and calling for a freeze on settlements. The ECAJ regards both those resolutions also as one sided; failing to take into account Israel's legitimate security concerns; and not reflecting adequately the responsibility of Palestinians to end attacks targeted at Israeli civilians.

The ECAJ understands that the changed vote by the Australian Government was motivated by Australia's desire not to jeopardize or impede negotiations for a peace settlement based on a two state solution, and accepts the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Australia remains a staunch and long standing supporter of Israel and understands completely Israel's legitimate security concerns.

The ECAJ notes that during the current session of the UN General Assembly, further resolutions will be considered in committee and in plenary session and expresses the strong expectation that Australia's proud and principled voting record on the Arab_Israel conflict will otherwise remain unchanged.

10 November 2008

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