



Executive Council
of Australian Jewry Inc.

MEDIA STATEMENT
Anton Block, President
19 February 2019

Latest developments in Malka Leifer case

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community welcomes the decision by the Jerusalem District Court to reject Malka Leifer's application to be released into home detention. The Court ruled that Leifer will remain in gaol in Israel on remand until the extradition proceedings are concluded. Leifer is an accused sex offender. Australia has sought her extradition to face 74 charges of child sexual abuse.

Commenting on the case, ECAJ president Anton Block said "It is heartening that the court completely rejected the claims made by Leifer's lawyers that her life would be in danger and that she would suffer irreparable damage by staying in jail for the duration of legal proceedings."

"We are also deeply troubled by grave allegations that Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman met with Jerusalem's district psychiatrist (Dr Jacob Charnes) to pressure him into issuing a false assessment for Leifer in support of her claim that she should not be extradited to Australia because she is unfit to stand trial due to her mental state", Mr Block said.

"We understand Israel's anti-corruption unit is now conducting an investigation into the conduct of the Deputy Health Minister. He should stand down from his position while the investigation is under way. If it is found that there is any truth to the allegations, the Deputy Minister should be prosecuted for interfering in the administration of justice." Mr Block also stated that in light of the allegations about the conduct of the Deputy Health Minister, "it is understandable that the court also ruled that another psychiatric assessment must be undertaken to test Leifer's claim that she is mentally unfit".

"Representatives of the ECAJ met on Monday with the Australian Ambassador to Israel and again conveyed our view that the extradition of Leifer to face justice without delay is a matter of the highest concern for the Australian Jewish community. We are grateful to the Ambassador and to the Australian Government for the assistance being offered to child sexual abuse survivors".

"We wish them continued strength and determination and commend them for their valiant pursuit of justice. Their dignity in the face of delays in the extradition trial and allegations of impropriety by various officials are a great credit to our community."

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