



48th ALP National Conference – 16-18 December 2018

Why Australia should recognise the State of Palestine

Background

Considering the outcomes and recommendations of the 47th ALP National Conference in 2015 with regard to the recognition of the State of Palestine, the following is a factsheet supporting such recognition within a specified time frame during the forthcoming 48th National Conference.

Motivations

- Current policies of the Netanyahu government (2009–present, with likely re-election next year) continue to cement the annexation of Area C (61% of the West Bank) and East Jerusalem through ongoing land grabs and settlement construction.
- The absence of a genuine peace process in the Middle East.
- A rapidly disappearing Palestine that will lead to either a ‘greater Israel’ apartheid state or several, semi-autonomous ‘Bantustans’; both outcomes will deny Palestinians the dignity of statehood.
- In 2017, 73% of Australians supported a Palestinian state, up from 61% in 2011 (Roy Morgan Research). ALP recognition would therefore bring Australia’s foreign policy on this sensitive issue into line with popular opinion.
- **The national identity and rights of the Palestinian people are being dissolved. If countries like Australia aren’t prepared to restore Palestine’s legitimacy through official recognition, then there really is no point in continuing to pay lip service to a two-state solution.**

Recognition will...

- **Empower the weaker and exploited party** by helping to redress the current imbalance of power, and further contribute to restoring legitimacy to the State of Palestine’s internationally supported aspiration for a sovereign, secure and **demilitarised** homeland on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- **Be a diplomatic but unequivocal rebuff** to Israel that Australia will not sit by idly while its project of land theft and settler colonialism in the West Bank erodes a viable two-state solution. Recognition is not an attack on the legitimacy of Israel or its right



to exist – rather, it is a response to the realities on the ground and an expression of support for a genuine and lasting peace.

- **Affirm the State of Palestine’s legitimacy** under the pragmatic and peace-focused leadership of the Palestinian Authority and PLO, and signal that Hamas’s vision – and Israeli plans to help entrench their rule over the Gaza Strip in order to sustain Palestinian division¹ – are not pathways to peace.
- **Acknowledge the legitimate right to self-determination** for the 5 million Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and for the 7 million Palestinian refugees in the diaspora.
- **Attest to Australia’s commitment to the rules-based international order**, including numerous UN resolutions that stress the illegality of and condemn Israel’s continuing confiscation of Palestinian land and its settlement enterprise.
- **Push back against the Trump administration’s unilateral and provocative decision-making** on Palestine and its impending ‘Ultimate Deal’, which will likely repudiate Palestinian demands for an independent homeland.

Precedents

- In 1947, the UN Partition Resolution 181 mandated Palestinian statehood.
- In 1974, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) recognised the right of self-determination, national independence and sovereignty for the Palestinian people, and has reaffirmed this recognition annually.
- In 1993, Palestine officially recognised the State of Israel.
- The State of Palestine is recognised by 137 (of 193) member states in the UN, including an expanding list of European countries and social democratic governments on the Continent.
- In 2012, the UNGA upgraded the status of Palestine to an observer non-member state. Accordingly, Palestine has become an internationally recognised state under occupation.

It is time to translate words into actions, including to firmly reject an apartheid system (military rule without civil rights), and to uphold Australia’s commitment to the political reality of a demilitarised Palestinian state on 1967 borders. We wish to express our appreciation for the ALP state branches’ passing of resolutions to recognise the State of Palestine, and kindly call on delegates at the 48th National Conference to respond favourably to this ever-increasing demand from both ALP members and broader Australian society.

¹ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/10/israel-hamas-gaza-strip-benjamin-netanyahu-avigdor-liberman.html>