



**Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors
Canberra**

Media Release by the Council of Arab Ambassadors in Australia concerning

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's comments on Jerusalem

17 October 2018

The Council of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra is deeply concerned and dismayed by Prime Minister Scott Morrison's recent announcement that he is considering both the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the relocation of Australia's embassy to the city.

That Mr Morrison would seriously entertain the idea of this unilateral move is very worrying, and his assertion that an embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is a "sensible proposal" is certainly regrettable and unhelpful.

Jerusalem is a key final-status issue as determined by the 1993 Oslo Accords which were signed by both the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the State of Israel. Unilateral moves by third parties to bypass the necessity of negotiations between Palestine and Israel to resolve this issue will not kickstart the stalled peace process and will not contribute towards a just and lasting peace in the region.

Any decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital or to relocate the Australian embassy would legitimise the status quo and affirm Israel's claims to the entire city, including the occupied East.

There is no doubt that if Prime Minister Morrison were to make this decision, then his government would be prejudicing the outcome of Jerusalem's final status. This is because of the current realities – all established by fait accompli – in Israel's favour that allow it to continue to pursue its vision for one, united Jerusalem while ignoring international law and the status of East Jerusalem as an integral part of the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

The two-state solution means nothing without an equitable resolution to these final-status issues. In the absence of a functioning peace process, the sensible course of action would be for Australia to recognise the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Australia has long-standing and esteemed economic, cultural and political relations with the Arab world. We sincerely wish to preserve these relations. We therefore call on the Australian Government and, in particular, Prime Minister Morrison, to reconsider his comments and to maintain Australia's long-held and bipartisan position on this sensitive issue in accordance with international law.

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