



## Media Release

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**Canberra, Australia**

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's recent comments in the United States, particularly that his government will take a 'stronger stand against the biased and unfair targeting of Israel in the UN General Assembly', are provocative and deeply disappointing.

If Israel is singled out at UN fora, then it's for good reason. It means that those member states refuse to dim the spotlight on its illegal, unending and demoralising military occupation. It also means that there is an international consensus that what is quickly becoming (if it hasn't already become) an apartheid West Bank shouldn't be downplayed with reference to Israel's more enlightened and palatable attributes.

It is tiresome and frustrating that leaders such as Mr Morrison continue to wilfully ignore all that which makes Israel an exception – the toxic policies of messianic fundamentalism, land theft, settler colonialism, home demolitions, etc. that are entrenching an apartheid reality in the West Bank. Israel is targeted because it chooses to be. The problem isn't the regular and sustained criticism that Israel faces, but rather the actions that elicit such a response. The vast majority of the international community at UN fora don't get it wrong; they understand what is happening and vote accordingly.

The Australian government's misplaced focus and lack of fair-mindedness were also clear in its silence following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent pledge to annex the Jordan Valley should he be re-elected. Surely that was more worthy of an expression of concern, if not condemnation. That it wasn't is equally disappointing.

So much of what Israel has done and continues to do contradicts the 'shared values' narrative, and so it's a shame that the Prime Minister sees only what he wants to see. Nevertheless, we once again call on the Australian government to support the General Assembly resolutions that are consistent with the realisation of a two-state solution, especially those that condemn ongoing settlement construction in the West Bank, and those that re-affirm the necessity of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

