



28 November 2023

Dear South Australian MPs and MLCs
Parliament of South Australia

I write as Chairperson of the Australian Friends of Palestine Association (AFOPA) in relation to the recent passage of the Israel motion in both houses of the South Australian Parliament.

We and our members are very disturbed by the introduction and passage of the motion.

We are dismayed and concerned that organisations such as ours, and others in the community that represent or have close ties with the Palestinian people, were not consulted about the motion. It appears, from the motion itself and some speeches made in support of the motion, that representatives of the South Australian Jewish community were consulted.

While the motion expressed humanitarian concern for all affected civilians and condemns the actions of Hamas, no reference was made to the historical context and contemporary realities that led to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023. This is essential to understanding the current situation.

The motion also, rightly, condemns antisemitism and hate speech, and 'recognises that generations of Jewish people have been subjected to...hateful prejudice' yet in pointing to antisemitism and Islamophobia, it acknowledges nothing of the pain, suffering and oppression suffered for generations by the Palestinian people under a brutal military occupation.

The events of 7 October did not occur in isolation from these facts. Indeed, the UN Secretary General stated on 24 October:

'It is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum. The Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation.'

For uttering these facts, Israel demanded the resignation of the Secretary General.

The state of Israel was founded in historical Palestine on violence against the Indigenous peoples of Palestine. Between 1948 and 1949, 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees as Zionist forces ethnically cleansed and destroyed over 500 towns and villages, killing some 15,000 Palestinians in a series of atrocities, including more than 70 massacres.

These events and the 75 years of oppression – manifested in ongoing dispossession (theft) of their land through the relentless Israeli colonial settler project; destruction and theft of agricultural land; house demolitions; arbitrary arrest and administrative detention without charge, including the taking of children in the dead of night from their homes by IDF soldiers; the ongoing indiscriminate killing of civilians with impunity – are the root cause of the 7 October attacks. Then of course there is the 16-year caging of 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, crushed into an area of 365 sq. kms – the size of Victor Harbor.

This, and the devastatingly debilitating economic, social and health conditions are the daily reality for Palestinian people. And we are told by Israel, and our governments, that the Hamas attack was 'unprovoked' and that Israel 'has a right to defend itself'. This phrase alone, oft repeated, has provided Israel with a blank cheque to pulverise the open prison that is Gaza and the 2.3 million civilians that have nowhere to run. And, in 'self defence' Israel invokes its power to deny water, food, electricity and fuel to those civilians including children.

In addition, the West Bank, nowhere near Gaza, has since 7 October experienced unprecedented numbers of murders of Palestinians by the IDF and fanatical extremist Jewish settlers, including the destruction of two entire villages. The relentless expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and East Jerusalem) supported and funded by the extreme right-wing government of Israel has contributed to the intensification of repression, violence and further worsening of the humanitarian situation for Palestinians living in an apartheid system (meticulously documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Israel's own human rights organisation B'Tselem).

We bring these facts to your attention and say that motions such as the one adopted do nothing towards addressing the long-standing injustices perpetrated on the Palestinian people – injustices that will continue once the bombing and killing in Gaza has stopped.

At the same time, AFOPA acknowledges and thanks those members who moved an amendment to the motion in the Upper House and/or spoke to this amendment.

The Palestinians will continue to resist their oppressors, the occupation, the colonial apartheid construct that is Israel until they are free to exist in dignity, with the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Israelis. Until that is achieved, until Western governments – our governments – demand that these basic rights, international laws and conventions are applied to Palestine, the barbarity that we are now witnessing will continue.

Hundreds and thousands of people around the world, including in Australia, are taking to the streets week after week in increasing numbers to protest Israeli barbarity in Gaza. This includes many thousands of Jewish people who are demanding a ceasefire, urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza and the end to the root of this disaster, the occupation.

We ask you to know and acknowledge the facts when next considering motions on Israel/Palestine.

Yours sincerely,



Christa Christaki
Chairperson, Australian Friends of Palestine Association

Why Palestine? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights. Edward Said

The Australian Friends of Palestine Association
GPO Box 946 Adelaide South Australia 5001
www.afopa.com.au secretary@afopa.com.au (08) 8232 5273