



# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

a progressive voice among jews, a jewish voice among progressives

26 May 2025

Senator The Hon. Penny Wong  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Wong,

## **The Government needs to take strong action regarding the dire situation in Gaza**

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society offers congratulations to the government on its re-election.

Since its inception, over 40 years ago, the AJDS has promoted a just solution to the conflict in Israel/Palestine. We recognise that a comprehensive resolution of the conflict is the only path to security and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians. This demands painful concessions on both sides, including accepting the reality of the others' permanency.

We urge your government to take a stronger stand on the Israel-Palestine conflict when, according to the UN, the 'worst-case scenario' of starvation is now unfolding [1]. Even with the small amount of aid now entering Gaza, resolution of the humanitarian crisis is far from resolved.

There are indications that the Israeli government intends to fully occupy and control Gaza and apparently remove the population of Gaza to third countries [2] [3]. Both acts are in contravention of international law. For the residents of Gaza, the prospect of ethnic cleansing is terrifying.

While we don't speak for the Jewish community, it is our strong impression that there are many people in our community who are very concerned by the actions of the Israeli

government in Gaza. The UK has suspended trade talks with Israel, and the UK, Canada, and France have strongly hinted at 'concrete actions'. Alongside forceful statements, and activity in international forums supporting a permanent ceasefire and long-term peace, Australia should consider targeted sanctions against Israel and against the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.

In a submission to DFAT, in May 2021, we argued that engagement with Israel through a human-rights-based trading relationship is a better way of advancing the rights and security of both Israelis and Palestinians than global BDS. It is an approach which supports Israeli sovereignty but does not neglect the just human rights of Palestinians [4]. Australia should

- Cease trade in military goods, including the purchase and sale of arm and security services with Israel, unless there is a pressing humanitarian need (for example, disaster situations)
- Subject non-military goods and services (e.g. food products) from Israeli companies that are manufactured in the Occupied Territories to sanction unless they meet human rights standards and are labelled Product of the Occupied Territories.
- Cease commercial and other (e.g. charitable, academic) relations with Israeli companies and institutions that are headquartered in the Occupied Territories.
- Review existing relations with the State of Israel with an eye to imposing human rights criteria on existing joint-projects that might unduly exclude Palestinians from equal rights and opportunities.
- Sanction the Palestinian Authority (and Hamas in Gaza). There are documented problems with human rights and the Palestinian Authority (and Hamas in Gaza) [5]. We also note that any relationship between Australian and Palestinian entities such as the Palestinian Authority should also be subject to a similar human rights assessment with respect to military, security, intelligence, and related services, and be subject to sanction if necessary.

Additionally

- We ask for the Australian government to sanction visits and Australian civilian contacts with high-level Members of the Knesset, government officials, and military who support the ethnic cleansing of Gaza or who are suspected of involvement in war crimes.
- We ask for a letter of protest on Israeli actions in Gaza to be delivered to the Israeli ambassador.
- Continue to grant refugee status to eligible Gazans.
- We ask for the government to make a Parliamentary Statement on Israel-Palestine as soon as possible.

We urge you to speak out and the government to take strong action. The situation in Gaza is dire.



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[1] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1162851>

[2] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy04km1zk0o>;  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/06/hamas-israel-hunger-war-in-gaza>

[3] <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/gaza-aid-contractors/>

[4] <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/feasibility-study-israel-submissions-ajds.pdf>

[5] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/palestine-state-of/report-palestine-state-of/>