



THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Bishop George Browning
President
Australia Palestine Advocacy Network
george@apan.org.au

Dear Bishop Browning

Thank you for your email of 27 October 2016 regarding the Palestinian Territories. I welcome your views on the UNESCO resolution, but it is the Government's assessment that the text is highly politicised, unbalanced and provocative, and reflects poorly on UNESCO as an institution. I am particularly concerned by the use of only the Islamic names for the holy sites, which could be seen as an attempt to alter the status quo at these Jewish and Islamic holy sites.

The Australian Government's long-standing position on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is to encourage direct negotiations towards a two-state solution. We regularly raise with Israel our concern about actions that undermine prospects for peace, most recently during my visit in September.

The Government has expressed its concern about alleged mistreatment of Palestinian minors in detention and security and judicial practices both publicly and directly with Israeli authorities on numerous occasions. I understand that Israel has taken a range of steps to improve conditions for minors in detention. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv continues to monitor the progress of reforms.

Australia also continues to provide tangible support to the Palestinian people and their future statehood and to improve their living conditions through our aid program. Australia will provide an estimated \$43.6 million in 2016-17 through our bilateral aid program and we are supporting UNRWA with \$80 million over four years to assist Palestinian refugees to access quality basic services.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Julie Bishop'.

Julie Bishop

11 NOV 2016