



Executive Council of Australian Jewry



הפדרציה הציונית באוסטרליה
ZIONIST FEDERATION
of Australia

13 December 2023

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE ZIONIST FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY

The Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) are deeply concerned by the inconsistency in Australia's decision to vote in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution calling for a ceasefire shortly after issuing a joint statement together with Canada and New Zealand that called for the removal and dismantling of Hamas.

The joint statement condemned Hamas' heinous acts of violence including sexual violence, the unacceptable treatment of hostages, and Hamas' use of Palestinian civilians as human shields. It called for Hamas to lay down its arms and stipulated that there is no role for Hamas in the future governance of Gaza.

We welcome this position.

However, the UN General Assembly resolution demands an immediate ceasefire, and does not call for Hamas to surrender or disarm. It also implies that Hamas can somehow be defeated without there being any large-scale impact on the civilian population, behind which Hamas deliberately hides.

We acknowledge the statement issued by the Australian Ambassador to the UN, H.E Mr James Larsen that refers to the call for a humanitarian ceasefire as a call for more humanitarian pauses and the fact that Australia supported the United States' attempt to unequivocally condemn Hamas for the 7 October terrorist attacks.

However, the fact that the resolution omitted these critical issues and appears to call for a ceasefire should have been enough of a reason to vote with Australia's closest ally, the United States and oppose this resolution.

The decision to vote in favour of this resolution has created uncertainty and confusion and is a departure from the clearly principled position that Australia adopted following Hamas' attack on 7 October.

The Australian Government cannot have it both ways. Either it stands by its position in the joint statement that recognises that Hamas must be removed from power and return all the hostages or it supports a ceasefire which would allow Hamas to remain in power and deliver on its promise to repeat the attacks of 7 October at the earliest possible opportunity.

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