



Asking the Australian Government to advocate against injustices inflicted on Palestinians

August 2026

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

Matthew 5:7-9

The Synod Justice and International Mission Cluster has nearly 30 years of experience of advocating for an end to the abuse of Palestinians by successive Israeli Governments and their security forces. The experience is that Israeli Governments have been highly resistant to requests and pressure from foreign governments to end the abuse and oppression of Palestinians, especially after the breakdown of the Oslo peace process and the second Intifada. Only some US Administrations appear to have had limited success at influencing the behaviour of Israeli Governments when they have tried.

In that context, the following action requests that the Australian Government make representations on two issues where there is already broader international pressure on the Netanyahu Government.

Starving Palestinian Public Servants of Income

The Netanyahu Government is conducting economic warfare on the Palestinians in the West Bank, in addition to allowing extremist settlers to make violent attacks, by confiscating 18 billion shekels (\$8.4 billion) of customs tax revenue from the Palestinian Authority. The lack of funds means public servants, like hospital staff and teachers, are on greatly reduced salaries, as low as \$11,000 a year, resulting in hardship for them and their families.

On 24 June 2026, the Palestinian Authority was able to pay only 50% of the salaries owed to public servants for work they had done in March 2026. It pays pharmaceutical manufacturers and importers a tiny part of what it owes them, which is just enough to get them to send in essential medicines.

In early July 2026, the EU-led Palestine Donor Group met in Brussels but pledged only \$67 million to support the Palestinian Authority, which will not even cover one month of reduced salaries for public servants.

The Israeli Defence Force Central Command Chief Avi Bluth recently warned Prime Minister Netanyahu that the continued withholding of Palestinian Authority funds is among the factors that could trigger an escalation of violence in the West Bank.

The Palestinian Authority has been forced to adopt increasingly severe austerity measures to cope with the starvation of revenue imposed by the Netanyahu government's sanctions.

Another major driver of the economic downturn is the government's ban on Palestinian workers entering Israel, despite reports that nearly all of Israel's security services – except for Israel Police – support lifting the restriction.

Other governments have called for the Netanyahu Government to return the confiscated tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority. For example, the French Government called for such action at the UN Security Council on 29 June 2026. The French permanent representative to the UN stated that the release of the tax revenue was vital as “A viable, reformed Palestinian Authority capable of fully exercising its responsibilities remains essential to any credible political prospect.”



Detention without charge or trial of Palestinian medical personnel from Gaza

Dr Abu Safiya from Gaza has been in detention for 18 months without charge or trial by Israeli security forces. Dr Abu Safiya is the director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza. His son was murdered in an Israeli army attack on Gaza and Dr Abu Safiya was wounded. Physicians for Human Rights Israel is seeking the release of Dr Abu Safiya and 13 other Palestinian medical personnel from Gaza who are being held without charge or trial.

The detention is being conducted under Israel's *Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law, No. 5762, 2002*, which does not permit the detained person to provide evidence to dispute the need for their detention effectively. While Dr Abu Safiya's detention is reviewed every six months by a judge at Be'er Sheva District Court, the reasons for the ongoing detention are not disclosed.

Dr Abu Safiya has been subjected to beatings while at the Rakefet wing at Nitzan Prison. These escalated following legal proceedings seeking his release being filed with the Israeli Supreme Court. After the appeal hearing Dr Abu Safiya alleges that prison guards beat him with a hammer and batons. His lawyer reported fresh, visible injuries on Dr Abu Safiya when he visited him in detention on 2 July 2026.

The Israeli authorities have stated that the allegations of abuse against him have been referred to the unit investigating prison guards. While such action is welcome, Israeli authorities have not allowed for an independent investigation into the allegations. The Israeli authorities have also refused to release the records of Dr Abu Safiya's medical assessments while he has been in detention.

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

Senator The Hon. Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister



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Points to make in your letter:

- Thank the Australian Government for establishing the International Peace Fund for Israelis and Palestinians with the governments of the UK and Canada.
- Request that the Australian Government increase its contribution to the fund in the next budget and that it encourages other governments to make contributions of their own to the fund.
- Request that the Australian Government join with other governments, if it has not already done so, to advocate for the Israeli Government to return to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank the tax revenue it is withholding. Express concern that the hardship the withholding of tax revenue is having on Palestinians has even caused the Central Command Chief of the Israeli Defence Forces to publicly express concern that it will drive Palestinians to violence.
- Request the Australian Government, if it has not already done so, to advocate to the Israeli Government for the release of Palestinian medical personnel from Gaza who have been detained without charge or trial, including Dr Hussam Abu Safiya.
- The Australian Government should also advocate that these detainees be given any necessary medical treatment they need.

Please send any replies you receive to jim@victas.uca.org.au