

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
By email

25 May 2020

Dear Minister,

We write to urge you to continue Australia's support for a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinians for a two-state solution, and to strongly express your opposition to the new Israeli government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank.

We believe that it is important for Israel's closest allies around the world to send a strong message against annexation and other threats to Israel's democracy.

New Israel Fund Australia is the leading Australian non-profit supporting democracy and equality in Israel. We are dedicated to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and alleviating hardship and suffering caused by inequality. Together with our global NIF partners, over the last 40 years, NIF has distributed more than US\$300 million in grants.

We are listening carefully to what our grantees in Israel are telling us about the proposal to annex unilaterally territory held by Israel since 1967. Our grantees fear that annexation would make the unequal and discriminatory legal system in the West Bank formal and permanent, and irrevocably harm Israel's democratic character. Our grantees also tell us that annexation of only a portion of the West Bank would further diminish the already fragile chances of a negotiated agreement between Israel and its Palestinian neighbours.

We believe that the consequences of the proposed unilateral moves are grave – for the Palestinian people, whose basic rights and aspirations for statehood would be permanently denied; but also for Israel's democratic character, its security and its international standing.

Our alarm at these consequences is shared by others in the Australian Jewish community who, along with NIF, have a track record of supporting and associating themselves with Israel.

New Israel Fund Australia urges the Morrison government to oppose any attempts towards unilateral annexation. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Ilana Snyder
President



Liam Getreu
Executive Director