



**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

MC25-004850

Professor Caroline Miller  
President  
Public Health Association  
policy@phaa.net.au

Dear Professor Miller

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the views of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) on the situation in Gaza.

Thank you for bringing the statement by the European Public Health Alliance to my attention, particularly its condemnation of 'racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia in all their forms', and the Board of the PHAA's endorsement of this statement.

There is no place in Australia for antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, hatred or discrimination of any kind and we unequivocally condemn it. And there is no justification for conflicts on the other side of the world being brought home and changing how Australians treat each other.

The Australian Government is responding through a range of domestic initiatives to address the impact of conflict in the Middle East in Australia. The Government has announced over \$271.4million in funding over four years to support Australian communities affected by the conflict in the Middle East. The initiatives this funding provides were developed following engagement with impacted communities and they support Australian Palestinian, Muslim, Jewish and other communities achieve a range of safety, security, mental health, cohesion and education objectives.

Australians have been understandably distressed by the violence, including the deaths of so many innocent civilians. As the Prime Minister has said, we have seen the situation in Gaza go far beyond the world's worst fears.

Australia welcomes with immense relief the securing of a ceasefire and the release of the hostages. After more than two years of conflict and a devastating loss of civilian life, this is a much-needed step towards peace.

Australia has consistently been part of international calls for a ceasefire, return of the hostages, and the unimpeded flow of aid to Gaza. We want to see the ceasefire maintained and aid to flow unimpeded to address the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. We urge all parties to respect the terms of the agreement and work towards implementing it in full.

Throughout this conflict, Australia has been a part of the international call on Israel to immediately lift restrictions on the flow of aid to Gaza, in line with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice. Alongside our international partners, including the UK, Canada, and Japan, we have condemned Israel's denial of aid and the killing of civilians, including children, seeking access to water and food. The Prime Minister has made clear this is indefensible, and a breach of international law.

With the ceasefire now in place, we are seeing some signs that much-needed aid is starting to flow to civilians in Gaza who have endured unacceptable hardship. Together with our partners, we will work to support the sustained and unimpeded delivery of aid.

Australia has committed more than \$130 million in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza and Lebanon since October 2023. Our most recent commitment of \$20 million was to support organisations with the scale and capacity to respond quickly to deliver food, medical supplies for field hospitals and other lifesaving support to women and children in Gaza. We are delivering our aid with key partners, including in close coordination with the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

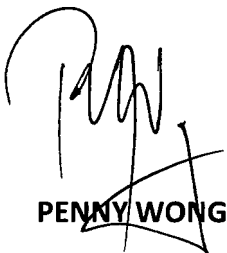
After a year-long diplomatic effort to drive global action to protect humanitarian workers in conflict zones, Australia was proud to lead the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel joined by more than 100 countries. The Declaration sets out practicable and actionable measures including: access to communications and equipment to stay safe in conflict zones; improved technology and planning tools; enhanced physical and mental health support for aid workers; new joint training for military personnel and aid workers; funding legal advice for aid workers who are victims of violence; and access to justice for aid workers killed or harmed in the line of duty. Humanitarian workers save lives. This work should never cost them their own.

Recognising Palestine reflects Australia's longstanding commitment to a two-state solution, which has always been the only path to enduring peace and security for the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. It also reflects Australia's work with partners over many months to contribute momentum to peace and breaking the cycle of violence the Middle East has known for generations.

There is a very long road to recovery in Gaza, securing long term peace and building the Palestinian state. Together with our partners, Australia will continue to be a constructive partner in support of the full implementation of the peace plan and to do what we can to contribute to a just and enduring two-state solution.

I appreciate you taking the time to write to me on this difficult issue.

Yours sincerely



PENNY WONG

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