



Chris Steel MLA

Treasurer

Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Minister for Heritage

Minister for Transport

Member for Murrumbidgee

Mr Tom Duncan

Clerk

ACT Legislative Assembly

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Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 27 August 2024 regarding petition E-PET-034-24 lodged by Mr Andrew Braddock MLA in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 27 August 2024 about Human Rights and Palestine.

The ACT Government acknowledges the distress in the Canberra community about the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, particularly in relation to loss of innocent civilian lives and the evolving humanitarian crisis. The ACT Government appreciates the Australian Government's efforts to address these issues through diplomatic and other channels to see an end to the suffering and loss of life and livelihood.

The ACT Government notes the recent developing context in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict both internationally and domestically.

On 15 January 2025, a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas was announced and is now well underway. The ACT Government welcomes the ceasefire and will continue to provide support in practical and effective ways where possible.

As the Assembly would be aware, on 29 August 2024 the former Treasurer, Mr Barr, tabled a response from the Government to the Assembly Resolution of 7 February 2024 about 'Human rights non-compliant companies – Divestments'.

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As advised in that response, Mr Barr wrote, on 26 July 2024, to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights seeking further information regarding the reliability and enduring nature of their database, necessary before deciding whether to adopt the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) database as a part of the Government's investment screening framework. The ACT Government awaits a response from the Commissioner.

The ACT Government is committed to a responsible investment framework and is committed to ongoing and regular reviews of the Responsible Investment Policy to ensure a cohesive, reliable and robust framework continues to be applied.

I acknowledge the other requests of the petitioners, many of which are complex and pose a range of significant legal and jurisdictional questions which would require further investigation before any action could be taken. At this stage, the ACT Government is not in a position to pursue these activities.

The ACT Government is committed to continue supporting our local multicultural community that has been affected by this conflict. The ACT Government recognises the importance of multiculturalism, and the significant value Canberra's growing cultural and linguistic diversity contributes to the city and our community. Canberra is an accredited Advanced level Welcoming City and is a proud Refugee Welcome Zone.

The ACT Government is gravely concerned by the significant rise in antisemitism and islamophobia that has occurred across Australia since the outbreak of the conflict. The ACT Government welcomes the convening of National Cabinet to tackle the rapidly evolving situation across the country with a rise in antisemitic violence and will work collaboratively with the Australian Government and other states and territories to deliver a national response.

I thank the petitioners for raising this matter with the Assembly. I trust this response is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Chris Steel MLA
Treasurer
31/01/2025