

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
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Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
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24 July 2020

### Israel's West Bank Annexation Plan

Dear Minister

I write to you on behalf of the Australian union movement, urging you to strongly condemn Israel's annexation of the West Bank. This move is a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the Geneva Conventions, UN resolutions, and the rights of the Palestinian people.

The annexation would have tremendous social and economic implications on Palestinian communities and workers. The plan is expected to disconnect around 200,000 Palestinians from their environment; 23% of the area to be annexed is privately owned Palestinian land, where the majority of the Palestinian agricultural sector is located and Palestinian workers gain their livelihoods. Vital water resources and fertile agricultural lands in the same areas would be permanently subject to the Israeli Land settlement law of 2017 which enables the Israeli government to control the properties of 'absentees' in Area C, and of properties it claims to be 'public property'.

Moreover, the plan would further advance the implementation of the 'Greater Jerusalem' law that enacted the annexation of three major settlement blocs that cover a land area of 175 square kilometres in the occupied Jerusalem district. This would destroy the prospect of any future negotiated agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian capital in the city. The annexation would break the territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem and the West Bank that is essential for the fabric of life of Palestinians and their ability to conduct sustainable independent lives in the future.

The proposed annexation plan is a stark violation of international law and unilaterally de facto nullifies the prospects for genuine negotiations leading to the realisation of a two-state solution based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the pre-1967 borders.

The ACTU supports the end of the occupation of Palestine and a just and sustainable peace in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the removal of illegal settlements, the withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian lands and the dismantling of the separation wall. We acknowledge your statement of 1 July reiterating Australia's report for a two-state solution and that you have raised your concerns directly with Israel. We call on your Government to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and confirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a free and independent Palestine.

Yours sincerely



Michele O'Neil

**President**