



07 December 2017

## ECAJ (our national body) Statement on Announcement of Moving of US Embassy to Jerusalem.

### *Recognition of Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel*

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, as the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, welcomes the announcement by US President Donald J. Trump recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and confirming that the US Embassy in Israel will be relocated to Jerusalem in recognition of the city's status as Israel's seat of government.

For many years, the ECAJ has supported such measures and has called in its policy platform for the Australian embassy to be relocated to Jerusalem.

Israel's parliament, Ministerial offices, Supreme Court, President's residence and Prime Minister's residence have been located in Jerusalem since the State of Israel was established in 1948. When government officials from other countries visit Israel, they meet with Israeli government officials, and one another, in Jerusalem. When the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his first visit to Israel in 1977, two years before Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty, he went to Jerusalem and addressed the Israeli parliament there.

Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is therefore a pragmatic acknowledgement of an existing reality.

President Trump clearly stated that the US has not made any pre-judgement about the boundaries of Jerusalem or sought to alter the status quo concerning the Holy sites. He referred to the Temple Mount also by its Arabic name, Haram al-Sharif.

The US embassy is likely to be relocated to Israel's government precinct in the western part of the city, which has been part of Israel's sovereign territory since 1948, not the part of Jerusalem that Israel captured from Jordan when it repelled Jordan's military attack in 1967, and is misleadingly referred to as "Occupied East Jerusalem".

Moving the embassy from one location within Israel's sovereign borders to another therefore does not pre-empt the outcome of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians for a two-state solution. The recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel does not preclude the designation of the predominantly Arab neighbourhoods in the eastern part of Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, as part of a comprehensive peace agreement.

We urge the Palestinian leadership to return to face to face negotiations with Israel rather than try to extract concessions from Israel through international pressure. Israel has made three public offers to the Palestinians which, after modest land swaps, would have given them a sovereign State over territory equal in size to 100% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The attempt to establish a Palestinian state in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel violates international agreements and would precipitate even worse violence and bloodshed than the conflict has produced to date.

Finally, we express our gratitude to the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Bridges for Peace and Christians for Israel for submitting a petition signed by 8,133 Australians to the Australian Parliament calling for the Australian embassy to be moved to Jerusalem, and to the Senator from Victoria, James Paterson, for tabling the petition on 5 December 2017. We hope that together with the announcement by the US Administration the petition will provide the impetus for a similar move by Australia in due course.

Contact:

Peter Wertheim AM | Executive Director

phone: 02 8353 8500 | m: 0408 160 904 | fax 02 9361 5888

e: [pwertheim@ecaj.org.au](mailto:pwertheim@ecaj.org.au) | [www.ecaj.org.au](http://www.ecaj.org.au)