

# AUSTRALIANS FOR PALESTINE

PO Box 2099  
Hawthorn VIC 3122  
Melbourne - Australia  
Tel: 03 9818 5080  
Fax: 03 9818 5009

info@australiansforpalestine.com  
www.australiansforpalestine.com

## MEDIA RELEASE 2 11 December 2006

*Prepared by SK/AFP*

### Australian "No" at UN to Palestinian rights

## Providing a Voice

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Press Release No 2 – 11 December 2006*

Australia's latest "no" vote in the United Nations General Assembly again demonstrated the Howard Government's unequivocal support for Israel. Last year, it had reversed Australia's almost 60-year-long support for the Palestinians' right to self-determination and a state of their own alongside Israel.

"This is an extraordinary failure to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people," said Moammar Mashni, spokesperson for Australians for Palestine. "These rights have long been recognised in international law and upheld by every country in the world except now Israel, the United States, Australia and four South Pacific island states."

In the last several years, the government has become increasingly defensive of Israel, regardless of Israel's human rights violations and its breaches of international law. Mr Mashni said that he was dismayed that the government had completely abandoned the principles upheld by successive governments on both sides of politics. "Effectively, this government now condones war crimes," said Mr. Mashni.

Quoting the recent Iraq Study Group report led by former US Secretary of State James Baker, Mr Mashni said that "the United States does its ally Israel no favours in avoiding direct involvement to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict." According to the report, there is no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace can only be achieved on the principle of "land for peace" under UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The report quite clearly states that the US should renew its commitment to a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

This is an opinion overwhelmingly supported by most of the world as was demonstrated in a recorded vote of 157 in favour to 7 against (10 abstentions) the resolution on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine by the United Nations General Assembly on 1 December 2006.

"While the US remains enmeshed with Israel in its flawed policies, Australia should have taken its own stand and voted "yes" in accordance with the principles of international law," said Mr Mashni. "This would have been in keeping with the position that the Howard government has consistently taken until 2004, when it for the first time abstained and then opted for a "no" vote thereafter. Certainly, it was the position taken by all previous governments. Putting our hat in the ring with the US and Israel only taints our reputation and is not in the best interests of Australia internationally."

For further information contact:  
Moammar Mashni 0419 999 773

**END**

