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*Prepared by SK/AFP*

### A first step to holding Israel to account

## Providing a Voice

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Press Release No 20 – 24 May 2010*

*Australia for Palestine* welcomes the Australian government's announcement today that it is expelling an Israeli diplomat over the faked Australian passports used by Israel to assassinate top Hamas commander Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai this year.

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith announced to the Parliament that there was no doubt that Israel was responsible after the extensive investigation carried out by Australian intelligence.

Commenting on this, AFP public advocate Michael Shaik stated that this step was vital to breaking the culture of impunity under which Israel has operated for so long. It would carry even more weight if the government followed the British example and refused to allow a replacement diplomat until Israel commits to no further misuse of Australian passports.

He added, that while the false passport affair had compromised Australia's security, the assassination for which the passports had been used was also a serious matter. Any government taking on the role of informer, judge, jury and executioner, is blatantly violating international law, particularly when Israel's actions are in pursuit of maintaining an illegal occupation.

As one of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, Australia has an obligation to call for an investigation of those responsible for ordering or carrying out the assassination. Mr Shaik said, "there are no justifications that would warrant such executions being sanctioned and it behoves our government to hold Israel to account for carrying out state-sponsored terrorism. Our integrity as a civilised nation," he said, "demands it."

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