

6 March 2014

Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Minister,

On behalf of Australian Quakers I write to raise two matters of concern in relation to Israel/Palestine:

1. We were disturbed by the television program Stone Cold Justice shown on the ABC's Four Corners on 10 February 2014. It was especially distressing to learn that (a) children as young as 5 are being arrested and maltreated at military facilities; (b) young Palestinians suspected of throwing stones are being dealt with in military rather than civil courts; (c) raids in the middle of the night are harassing families and creating a climate of fear; and (d) residents of Israeli settlements in the West Bank appear to have impunity when they attack Palestinians nearby. We note that the program also showed some former Israeli soldiers speaking out about such policies and practices.
2. We have seen reports that members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) have been prevented from entering Palestine by Israeli border guards. Some of our own members have taken part in the accompaniment and support work of CPT in Palestine, so we are aware of the contribution they make to creating safety and keeping the peace in tense areas. We understand that CPT has taken a case to the Israeli High Court on the grounds that the refusal to allow access is contrary to the Israeli Law of Freedom and Dignity.

We urge you and the Government to examine closely these concerns, and to take up with the Israeli Government what appear to be legitimate grounds for grievance over Occupation policies in Palestine.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Presiding Clerk

Copies to Shadow Foreign Minister and Greens

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