



28 April 2008

[address]

Dear,

On 15 May, the Palestinians will commemorate 60 years of their dispossession - a catastrophic upheaval of their society known as al-Nakba. The bipartisan motion moved by the Prime Minister and Dr Nelson honouring Israel's 60 years of independence in March this year, totally ignored the plight of the Palestinians - their human rights, the uprooting of their established society, and their identity as a people with millennia-old connections to the land that was historically known as Palestine. Today, 7.2 million Palestinians are still refugees: not only have they been refused their inalienable right to return home, they have never been compensated for their devastating loss.

As Australia's Governor-General goes to Israel for the first time to attend a war memorial service in honour of Australian soldiers who fell and were buried in Palestine, Palestinians can only watch in despair as even that historical connection with Palestine is usurped by a state that did not exist when these soldiers fought there in the two wars of last century. One has only to look at our own war memorials to know that the land was called Palestine, its name clearly etched in stone for all to see.

While the bravery of Australian soldiers helped release the Arabs from the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, no one imagined then that the Palestinians would, within decades, become prisoners of an occupation that would systematically see them cleansed from their homes and land. We should not forget that the West's (including Australia's) hand in the partition of Palestine led to these horrific consequences, and that should be reason enough for us to make amends.

In fairness, Palestinians and those who support their quest for justice, seek acknowledgement from the Parliament of their 60 years of suffering and a validation of their people's right to pursue justice, freedom and peace. Attached are letters to both Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Leader of the Opposition Dr Nelson, requesting that they move a bipartisan motion to that effect. We deeply believe that the suffering felt by Palestinians is as legitimate as the suffering of any other traumatised people, and should not be denied.

We ask that you support this request and bring to bear your influence on your own party's leader to consider favourably such a bipartisan motion. Although symbolic, it would send a much-needed message of compassion, support and hope for a better future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karkar', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Sonja Karkar
Women for Palestine
Australians for Palesti

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bassam Dally', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Assoc Professor Bassam Dally
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