

**Pax
Christi
Australia**

**International
Christian Peace Movement**

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The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

December 14, 2018

Dear Prime Minister,

I write on behalf of the Pax Christi Australia, a Christian Peace organisation to object to the Australian Government's possible recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the shifting of the Australian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

We are aware that this has become a contentious issue and indeed a political one but we see such changes in policy as hindering the fragile peace process. There are many elements to this issue but in speaking out against such a move we are wanting to place ourselves in solidarity with the Christian community in Palestine. Last December the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem wrote to President Trump stating their profound opposition to any change in the international status of Jerusalem, stating that such a move would only contribute to greater conflict and division. What was at stake one year ago was the recognition by the US of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the moving of the US embassy, which was subsequently moved from Tel Aviv.

Now one year later, we urge your Government to support the views of the United Nations in relation to Jerusalem – that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved by Israel and Palestine together, that the annexation of east Jerusalem is illegal under international law, and that the declaration by Israel that Jerusalem is its capital is also illegal under international law. We are concerned that Australia will isolate itself internationally on Middle East policy by shifting the embassy to Jerusalem, when the vast majority of nations stand with the UN resolutions.

Prime Minister, as Christians and as Australians we see no justification for changing Australia's policy regarding Jerusalem. The church leaders in Jerusalem itself have spoken and many people in Australia are aware of the implications of any change. We ask that the Australian Government leave the embassy in Tel Aviv, and work constructively with the UN to bring Israel and Palestine back into peace negotiations, and to end the occupation of Palestine and the longstanding suffering of the Palestinian people.

Yours faithfully,
Father Claude Mostowik
President,
Pax Christi Australia

*Pax Christi is a Christian worldwide movement for peace and disarmament.
It regards justice and human rights as central to peacebuilding
and fosters the spiritual dimension of peacemaking.*

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