



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

16 May 2021

### **Statement by H.E. The Hon. Mitch Fifield, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations**

Australia is deeply concerned by the escalating violence in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We unequivocally call on all leaders to take immediate steps to halt the violence and exercise restraint, and to move without delay towards a sustainable peace. Indiscriminate attacks with disregard for civilian casualties perpetuate the cycle of violence and bloodshed. The protection of civilians must remain paramount.

Australia condemns the relentless and indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas. The State of Israel unquestionably has the right to defend itself and its people in accordance with international law. Equally, the Palestinian people must be able to live peacefully.

The focus of all parties must be on a return to direct and genuine peace negotiations as soon as possible, with a view to defining a just, durable and resilient peace agreement. To support this objective, we urge all parties to refrain from violent or provocative acts, or actions that increase tensions.

Australia strongly supports a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, where Israel and a future state of Palestine exist in peace and security within internationally recognised borders.