

## **Statement re escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza**

**Dr Sophie Scamps MP**

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I support the recent joint statement of the Australian Government and 23 other nations calling for Israel to uphold humanitarian principles by allowing a full resumption of aid to flow into Gaza and for aid groups to be able to work independently and impartially. But as thousands of innocent victims continue to starve and die – Australia must do more.

I again add my voice to the widespread international calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all the hostages by Hamas so they can be reunited with their families. I also call for the immediate and unhindered delivery of aid to save the lives of Palestinians in Gaza who are facing starvation. The UN has warned that the trickle of aid currently being allowed into Gaza following the 11-week blockade is wholly inadequate to stop a man-made famine unfolding.

Urgent medical supplies and medicines are also being held at the border, and it is reported that hospitals will soon run out of supplies. On top of this, the latest figures from the UN and Healthcare Workers Watch estimate that more than 1,000 healthcare workers, including nurses, surgeons and paramedics, have been killed in the last 17 months. Thousands of injured civilians, including women and children, are dying needlessly due to these continued impacts on an already devastated health system.

The Israeli Government must act in accordance with international humanitarian law and ensure that civilians and aid and medical workers do not continue to be casualties of this conflict. As a founding member of the UN with an enduring commitment to human rights, Australia has a duty to apply strong diplomatic pressure to ensure this occurs.

Any forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza would breach international law. The Israeli Ambassador to Australia must provide the Australian Government with the assurance that this will not occur and urgently explain how adequate food and medical aid will be immediately delivered to the people of Gaza.

Around Australia, our hearts broke for the affected families and the people of Israel following the barbaric attacks by Hamas on October 7, 2023. My earnest hope and call, continues to be for all remaining hostages to be reunited with their families. Our hearts also break for the people of Gaza.

Australia has a proud history of standing up for the rights of our fellow humans no matter where they live around the world. We must use what diplomatic levers we have to prevent the unconscionable starvation and death of so many people and bring the hostages home. May our humanity prevail.

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