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THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

5 OCT 2011

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 22 August 2011 regarding the petition for the recognition of a Palestinian State.

Australia strongly supports a negotiated two-state solution in the Middle East that will allow a secure Israel to live side-by-side with a secure and independent future Palestinian state. During my visits to the region in December 2010 and March and April 2011, I urged a return to direct negotiations as a matter of urgency.

As a tangible demonstration of Australia's support to the peace process, we have provided almost \$170 million of humanitarian and institution-building assistance to the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) since 2007. On 18 September, I signed a five-year development partnership with Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad which includes regular budget support and 50 scholarships for Palestinian students in those disciplines critical to institution-building.

The Australian Government is closely following developments related to Palestinian statehood. If the matter is referred to the United Nations General Assembly, the Government will closely consider Australia's position, including on any draft resolution.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd

CC Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Member for Calwell