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THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

28 JUL 2011

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2011 regarding the petition for sanctions on trade and other activities with Israel.

The Australian Government strongly disagrees with boycott movements that seek to ban exchanges with Israel, and with policies that impede legitimate trade between states. Any such boycott against Israel, in addition to harming the Palestinian people economically, would be unhelpful to the continuation of the Middle East peace process. The Australian Government does not conduct joint exercises with the Israeli Defence Force.

Australia consistently and strongly supports a negotiated two-state solution that allows a secure and independent Israel to live side-by-side with a secure and independent future Palestinian state. As a tangible demonstration of our support, the Australian Government has provided almost \$160 million of humanitarian and institution-building assistance to the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian refugees since 2007. The Australian Government's view is that these practical efforts to support the peace process are more constructive than boycotts.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd