

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הפועל של
יהודי אוסטרליה

The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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Joint Distribution Committee Australia

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Federation of Australian Jewish
Ex-Service Associations
New Zealand Jewish Council
Zionist Federation of Australia
Council of Orthodox Synagogues of
Australia



26 March 2019

Dr. Ahmed Shaheed
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Email: submissionsreligion@ohchr.org; srforb@gmail.com

Dear Dr Shaheed

We refer to your call for submissions to provide input for the preparation of your report on antisemitism, which is due to be delivered to the UN General Assembly in September 2019.

By way of background, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (the ECAJ) has since 1944 has been the elected peak body of Australian Jewry representing at the national level the Jewish communities of each of the States and Territories, as well as other national Jewish organisations. The ECAJ represents the needs and interests of the Australian Jewish community to the Federal government and bureaucracy, the media and other ethnic and faith communities. Altogether, the ECAJ sits at the apex of approximately 200 of the major Jewish communal bodies across Australia, which are the lifeblood of the Australian Jewish community.

Overall, Australia remains a stable, vibrant and tolerant democracy, where Jews face no official discrimination, and are free to observe their faith and traditions. Nevertheless, antisemitism persists. Whilst antisemitism is a far less severe problem in Australia than it currently is in the countries of Europe, the UK, the Middle East, North Africa and parts of South Asia, there are segments of Australian society which are not only hostile towards Jews, but actively and publicly express that hatred with words and threatened or actual violent acts. As a result, and by necessity, physical security and its associated costs remain a prime concern for the Australian Jewish community.

The Jewish community is the only faith community within Australia whose places of worship, schools, communal organisations and community centres need, for security reasons, to operate under the protection of high fences, armed guards, metal detectors, CCTV cameras and the like. The necessity is recognised by Australia's law enforcement agencies and arises from the entrenched and protean nature of antisemitism in western and Muslim culture, resulting in a high incidence of physical

attacks against Jews and Jewish communal buildings over the last three decades, and continuing threats.

The ECAJ has researched, compiled and published the Annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia since 1990. These reports are distributed to official Human Rights and Anti-Racism bodies, such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, Federal and State politicians, Federal and State law enforcement agencies, various Embassies, the Federal parliamentary library and State libraries, Universities and academics, religious bodies and sections of the mainstream media.

In response to your request for information on antisemitic incidents, we draw your attention to the following documents which may be accessed online:

- [The ECAJ's Annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia for the year ending 30 September 2018](#); and
- [The ECAJ's Annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia for the year ending 30 September 2017](#).

In response to your request for information on Laws and Policies affecting the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief of Jews in Australia, please find attached the ECAJ's written submission dated 10 February 2017 to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade of the Australian parliament.

We trust that you will find this information of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Anton Block
President



Peter Wertheim
Co-CEO



Alex Ryvchin
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