

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
Government House
Dunrossil Drive
YARRALUMLA ACT 2600

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Monday, 5 January 2026

Dear Governor-General and Prime Minister,

We write to urgently ask for the retraction of the Australian Government's invitation to President Isaac Herzog of Israel.

This invitation risks violating Australia's international obligations and exacerbating racism and antisemitism during an incredibly fragile moment.

President Herzog is not a neutral or ceremonial head of state. The UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory concluded in September 2025 that Israeli President Isaac Herzog had "incited the commission of genocide and that Israeli authorities have failed to take action against them to punish this incitement". In October 2023, he publicly attributed collective responsibility to the civilian population of Gaza, stating: "It's an entire nation out there that is responsible. This rhetoric about civilians not being involved — it's absolutely not true. They could have risen up . . . And we will fight until we break their backbone".

Herzog's comments have been cited by international legal scholars and human rights organisations as normalising collective punishment, prohibited under international humanitarian law, and form part of the evidentiary context before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Australia's obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide are clear. Article 1 imposes an obligation to prevent genocide that arises once a State becomes aware, or ought reasonably to have become aware, of a serious risk that genocide may be committed. Article III further prohibits not only genocide itself but also complicity, including conduct that knowingly aids, abets, or legitimises the commission or incitement of genocidal acts. The International Court of Justice's provisional measures in *South Africa v Israel* place all States Parties on notice of a plausible risk of acts falling within the scope of the Convention. In these circumstances, proceeding with an official visit by President Isaac Herzog would expose Australia to credible claims that it has engaged in conduct inconsistent with its obligations under international law.

Herzog has been fully implicated in Israel's military aggression. In December 2023 he was witnessed signing an artillery shell bound for Gaza and in 2024 he falsely denied Israeli responsibility for the illegal attacks using pagers and walkie-talkies in Lebanon, killing twelve people, including children, and wounding three thousand.

Facilitating this visit does nothing to support the healing of Jewish communities in Australia, following the horrific massacre in Bondi. Hosting a figure publicly associated with the continuation of the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, and the ongoing occupation and

displacement within Palestinian territories, risks further deepening divisions within a community already grappling with the harmful conflation of Zionism (a political ideology), Judaism (a religion), and Jewish identity and will further alienate our own community while increasing the risk of antisemitism. Publicly hosting this head of state risks exacerbating antisemitism by implicitly associating Jewish Australians with alleged war crimes over which they have no control.

Jewish communities are not united. Some, both religious and secular, are not Zionist or identify as anti-Zionist. Many fundamentally disagree with Israel's brutal occupation and apartheid regime and are outspoken about the Gaza genocide and Australia's complicity in it.

Mass protests must be expected if President Herzog arrives in Australia. Protests will include a very large contingent of Jewish participants, reflecting moral opposition to ongoing atrocities. Official engagement in the face of such demonstrable community opposition would risk inflaming tensions, fracturing social cohesion, and undermining public safety. It would further undermine Australia's credibility as a defender of international law and inflame anti-Palestinian racism by further dehumanising Palestinians. These consequences are foreseeable, preventable, and incompatible with Australia's legal and moral responsibilities.

A principled decision to retract the invitation would affirm the Australian Government's commitment to ethical values, international law and the protection of all communities from racism and antisemitism.

Yours sincerely,

- Jewish Council of Australia
- Jews for Palestine (WA)
- Loud Jew Collective
- Jews Against the Occupation '48
- Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney
- Coalition of Women for Justice and Peace
- Jewish Advocates for Understanding Antisemitism
- Jews for Justice
- Anti-Zionism Australia
- Jews for a Free Palestine
- Jewish Women 4 Peace Action Ready Group