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Arab Council Australia's Statement on Addressing Racism in Australia

Arab Council Australia calls on the Australian government to reconsider the creation of special envoy positions to address Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

The Council agrees with the Prime Minister's statement that "communities are distressed" and that "as leaders, we need to foster the unity, cohesion, and diversity that has always been our nation's greatest strength,". Having worked in this space for decades ACA does not believe that creating such special envoy positions contributes to unity or social cohesion.

"We condemn the rise of all forms of racism, including anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, and anti-Muslim racism as well as anti-Semitism. We strongly believe that selective responses to anti-racism are not the appropriate solutions and only serve to create further divisions in society."

"Racism, in any form, is a stain on humanity. Governments and communities should work at all levels to address the root causes of racism", said Hassan Moussa, CEO of Arab Council Australia.

The ongoing genocide in Gaza against innocent civilians has resulted in the tragic loss of more than 40,000 lives, mostly women and children, as well as the destruction of hospitals, schools, and other crucial infrastructure. These brutalities have expectedly increased the condemnation of Israel and that should not be conflated with anti-Semitism. While anti-Semitism is abhorrent and should not be tolerated, it should not be used as a shield to protect Israel from legitimate criticism.

The creation of an envoy position for anti-Semitism only exacerbates divisions in our society and pits communities against each other, especially when the chosen envoy has a public history as a lobbyist for Israel. Similarly, the proposed envoy position to counter Islamophobia is another attempt by the government to appear impartial, is divisive and does not contribute social cohesion nor address the rise of racism impacting communities.

"We urge the government to instead re-allocate resources for these two positions to the Race Discrimination Commissioner of the Australian Human Rights Commission to genuinely combat racism and promote a fair and inclusive multicultural society," said Hassan Moussa.

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Media statement

Enquiries

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