

Marrickville Peace Group

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Ambassador Shmuel Ben-Shmuel
Embassy of Israel
6 Turrana Street
Yarralumla ACT 2600

16 August 2017

Dear Ambassador Ben-Shmuel

Re: Confiscation of solar panels

Marrickville Peace Group is moved to contact you because Bethlehem is Marrickville's 'sister city'.

The Group protests at the actions of Israel's army in confiscating solar panels providing electricity to two villages, Jubbet al-Dhib and Abu Nuwar, both near Bethlehem.

As you will be aware, Jubbet al-Dhib is a small Palestinian village just 6.5 kilometres southeast of Bethlehem. It is very close to Israeli "outpost" villages, squatter settlements which are illegal under both international and your own Israeli law. Despite their illegality the Israeli government provides these squatter settlements with electricity while simultaneously refusing connections to the main power grid for residents of neighbouring villages housing indigenous Palestinians.

We protest, in the strongest terms, to the recent confiscation (July 2017) of the hybrid solar system, costing more than half a million Australian dollars, which was donated to the village by the Dutch government last year.

We also add our voice to international protests against the confiscation of solar panels from another village near Bethlehem.

You will also be aware that the village of Abu Nuwar has had the solar panels providing power to their small school confiscated. This was the only power source available to their pre-school and primary school building. On Wednesday (9/8/2017) the Israeli Civil Administration confiscated these panels leaving the school without any source of power.

We call on your government to end its discriminatory practices both inside Israel, and in Occupied Palestine, and to accord equal rights and privileges to all residents of the lands under Israeli government control.

Nick Deane
On behalf of Marrickville Peace Group