

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Senator the Hon. Bob Carr

April 10, 2012

ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

The Australian Government today expressed concern that Israel's latest announcement on settlements could further complicate prospects for resumed direct negotiations on an Israel-Palestinian peace.

The announcements from the Israeli Government included tenders for new housing construction in East Jerusalem and the West Bank; and retrospectively legalising the status, rather than evacuating, several outposts in the West Bank. This was contrary to previous commitments from the Government.

The Australian Government has consistently called on both sides to show restraint and comply with their obligations under the Quartet's Roadmap for Peace and other previous agreements. This includes settlements because it is counter-productive to the peace process.

Australia believes in a negotiated two state solution to the conflict, and urges Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume direct negotiations without preconditions.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr said the announcement was an unhelpful development at a time when both sides need to take action to build trust and confidence.

"These announcements will not help efforts to bring both parties back to direct negotiations, which is the only path forward to achieving a two-state solution," Senator Carr said.

Minister's Office: 02 6277 7500 or 0419 206 068