



His Excellency Mr Mark Sofer
Ambassador to Australia
Embassy of Israel
6 Turrana Street
Yarralumla ACT 2600
By email: info@canberra.mfa.gov.il

19 November 2018

Your Excellency,

On Saturday 17 November 2018, the leadership of the International Federation of Journalists was attacked using tear gas while holding a peaceful demonstration at the Qalandia checkpoint, within the Palestinian Territories.

We understand that Israeli authorities were informed ahead of time that a press conference would take place, and that the delegation of journalists and union leaders would peacefully approach the checkpoint before withdrawing.

Israel has every right to protect its borders and secure the safety of its citizens, but this demonstration offered zero threat to the security of your country.

The group approached the border wearing IFJ press uniforms and holding their IFJ Press passes. Without warning, they were bombarded with canisters of tear gas. One journalist was injured in the attack and many others suffered choking related symptoms.

An Australian journalist was part of the delegation and suffered breathing difficulties during the unprovoked attack.

We are certain you agree that freedom of the press and freedom of assembly are inalienable rights that deserve protection. Therefore, we respectfully request an explanation as to why the attack occurred in flagrant violation of these rights.

Furthermore we join the IFJ leadership in requesting an explanation from the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, in relation to this unprovoked physical assault that is a violation of freedom of movement and freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely

Marcus Strom
Media Federal President

Paul Murphy
Chief Executive