Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 216
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I oppose this Bill because its speech rules are too broad, could be used against people speaking up for Palestinian rights, and are being rushed through without enough public input.

Key points

1. It risks censoring everyday political speech

The Bill creates an offence for using "prohibited expressions", which can include reciting, publishing or displaying certain words or messages. This is very broad and could capture peaceful, political speech about Palestine. Queensland's Human Rights Act 2019 protects free expression and peaceful assembly, so any limits should be narrow and necessary, these ones aren't.

2. It lets government label groups with too much power

The Bill allows the government to name "prescribed organisations", which then drives what symbols/expressions are banned. If this is done by regulation with weak limits, it gives too much control over political speech. Queensland's law making principles say laws should have clear limits and be subject to proper parliamentary scrutiny.

3. It blurs the line between hate and fair criticism

The Explanatory Notes say the Bill aims to ban expressions used to incite discrimination, hostility or violence. Without clear safeguards, this can mix up real hate with legitimate criticism of the Israeli government and advocacy for Palestinian human rights.

4. International standards support Palestinian rights

Two UN human rights treaties, the ICCPR and the ICESCR say all peoples have the right to self determination (Article 1). The UN General Assembly has reaffirmed this right for the Palestinian people in recent resolutions. People who speak up for Palestinian rights should not be silenced by overly broad speech bans.

5. Protect worship, without punishing peaceful protest

The Bill increases penalties around places of worship and adds an offence for intimidating or obstructing people attending worship. That aim is valid, but the law should be precise so it doesn't punish peaceful, non obstructive protests, including those expressing solidarity with Palestinians. Queensland's Human Rights Act 2019 protects peaceful assembly.

6. The process is rushed

Public submissions close 10:00am, 17 February 2026, the hearing is 19 February, and the report is due 27 February. That is very little time for a Bill that affects free speech, protest, and policing, and that could disproportionately impact people speaking up for Palestine.

What I ask the Committee to do (simple fixes)

• Narrow the speech offence (s 52DA): Only ban speech where there is clear intent to stir up violence or discrimination and a real, immediate risk of harm. Add defences for good faith journalism, research, education and political discussion (including on Palestine).

• Put strong limits on "prescribed organisations" (s 52CA). Put any list in the Act or, if done by regulation, require strict criteria, reasons tabled in Parliament, disallowance, and a sunset/review so powers can't be misused.

• Make the Notes crystal clear. State plainly that the law targets real incitement, not lawful criticism or advocacy for Palestinian rights.

• Keep peaceful protest legal at places of worship. Define "intimidation" carefully, require intent, and include a reasonable excuse defence so peaceful, non obstructive protests remain protected.

• Allow more time or split the Bill. Give the public time to engage properly or separate the speech parts from the weapons/policing parts so each gets the attention it deserves.

I oppose this Bill because it overreaches on speech, could be used against people who support Palestinian rights, and is rushed. Queensland law protects free expression and peaceful protest, and international law recognises Palestinian self determination. Please fix the speech parts, limit any listing powers, protect peaceful protest, justify the policing/weapons changes, and give the community more time.