

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

**Submission No:** 288

**Submission By:** Falesteen Inc

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# **Submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee**

## **Inquiry into the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026**

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### **SUBMISSION**

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

To: Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Date: 16 February 2026

#### **1. Introduction**

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide this submission on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026 (the Bill).

Falesteen Inc is a community organisation for Palestinians in Queensland that aims to strengthen the Palestinian identity, heritage & culture in QLD's Palestinian community. We have a community of around 1000 Palestinians in Queensland, and we have been deeply devastated by the ongoing genocide in Gaza, and the ethnic cleansing in the West Bank, over the past two years. Legal and peaceful protests have been vital to our community over the past two and a half years, as spaces where we have genuinely experienced solidarity and support from fellow Queenslanders. We have been joined by a very diverse range of Queenslanders and communities that have come and stood by our side as we suffered extreme pain and loss of relatives, friends and homeland in Gaza. This includes many Jewish Queenslanders, who have stood alongside us during the genocide, and took part in the protests, and chanted with us "from the river to the sea...Palestine will be free".

We unequivocally condemn antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and all forms of violence directed at any community. Queensland must remain a safe, multicultural and an inclusive society where all faith and cultural groups feel welcome and protected.

While we support strong measures to prevent violence and genuine hate conduct, we are concerned that certain elements of the Bill — particularly the proposed proscription of expressions and expansion of speech-based offences — may undermine fundamental democratic freedoms and create negative unintended consequences.

This submission does not address the firearms component of the proposed Bill, and is only focused on the rights for freedom for political expression, especially concerning the rights of Palestinians for freedom, justice and self determination.

## 2. Support for Safety and Anti-Violence Measures

We support provisions that:

- Strengthen protections for places of worship and faith communities;
- Increase penalties for vandalism, intimidation, or violence targeting religious institutions;
- Improve firearm licensing, storage, and enforcement;
- Prevent high-risk individuals from accessing weapons;
- Address direct incitement to violence and serious vilification.

Targeted reforms aimed at genuine threats to safety are necessary and appropriate.

## 3. Concerns Regarding Proscription of Expressions

### (a) Criminalisation of Political Speech

The proposed ability to proscribe particular phrases raises serious concerns regarding freedom of expression and the implied freedom of political communication.

Political slogans — particularly those arising in response to international conflicts — are often contested and emotionally charged. However, freedom of political speech lies at the core of democratic participation. Criminalising phrases that do not meet the existing legal threshold for incitement risks expanding the scope of criminal law into areas of lawful protest and advocacy.

Queensland and federal law already prohibit:

- Incitement to violence;
- Serious vilification;
- Harassment and menacing conduct;
- Public nuisance involving threats.

If speech crosses into violence or incitement, it can already be prosecuted under existing laws. As such, additional proscription powers are not necessary.

(b) Proportionality and Human Rights

Under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), any limitation on rights must be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

The proscription of expressions:

- May impose significant penalties on speech that is political in nature;
- Risks creating uncertainty about the right to engage in lawful protest;
- May disproportionately affect particular communities;
- May generate a chilling effect, particularly among young people and ethnic groups engaging in civic debate.

Criminal law is the most coercive power of the State and should be narrowly applied. Before expanding speech-based offences, Parliament should carefully assess whether existing legal tools are sufficient.

### (c) Risk of Selective Application

Laws must be neutral in design and consistent in application across all communities.

If legislation appears to focus on slogans associated with one community without equivalent scrutiny of comparable expressions elsewhere, it risks creating a perception of selective, discriminatory targeting. This may erode public trust and weaken social cohesion — the opposite of the Bill's intended purpose.

We feel that elements of this Bill are selective and discriminatory against the Palestinian community in Queensland. Media reporting around this Bill, including comments from the Premier, have focused on two phrases commonly used by, and associated with, the Palestinian struggle for freedom. The Explanatory Notes state that the intention of these proscription powers are to criminalise "terrorist slogans", "chants or phrases rooted in hate" and phrases which are "substantially representative of an ideology of extreme prejudice"<sup>1</sup>. In singling out these phrases, it appears as if the Premier intends to mean that these phrases, closely associated with the Palestinian community, are terrorist slogans, thus that Palestinians are terrorists. This makes the Bill not only discriminatory, but racist in its very nature.

The phrase "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free" is deeply rooted in the aspiration for freedom and dignity for all individuals living within the lands stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. It represents a vision for liberation and equality, regardless of background, faith, or nationality. Palestinians have lived on the lands "from the river to the sea" for millennia. Between 1947 and 1949, what is referred to historically as Al-Nakba, approximately 80% of the Palestinian population were expelled from their cities, towns and villages, and ethnically cleansed without being allowed to return until today. This chant is our yearning to our homeland that was unjustly colonised, and not a call for violence or revenge. On the contrary, the peak of Palestinian aspiration is living equally on our land, sharing it with its current coloniser.

Clear definitions, transparent enforcement guidance, and ongoing monitoring are essential to prevent uneven application.

## 4. Recommendations

We respectfully recommend that the Committee:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/5826T0141/5826t141.pdf>

1. The Bill as currently drafted should therefore not be passed
2. Retain and strengthen measures addressing violence, vandalism, and genuine incitement.
3. Remove or substantially narrow provisions enabling the proscription of expressions, especially expressions that have varied interpretations.
4. Ensure any speech-related offence is strictly tied to clear incitement of violence or serious vilification.
5. Undertake meaningful consultation with the Palestinian community, the Muslim community, multicultural and faith communities, as well as human rights organisations and pro-democracy organisations before finalising the draft law(s).
6. Conduct a detailed Human Rights Act compatibility assessment focused on proportionality and political communication.

## 5. Conclusion

The Queensland government must take antisemitism and all forms of hate seriously, including Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism (APR). At the same time, reforms must protect the democratic principles that safeguard every community — including freedom of expression, peaceful protest, and equal treatment before the law.

Legislation should strengthen safety without unnecessarily restricting lawful political speech or creating division. We urge the Committee to ensure that proper consultation is undertaken, and major reforms are applied to the current draft to cut down any laws that can be used as a form of political gagging for the Palestinian, and pro-Palestinian communities, and that any final reforms are proportionate, clear, and consistent with Queensland's human rights framework.