




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Middle East

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.09 pm): I rise to speak on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the very real impact that this unfolding human tragedy is having on many in my community. I have always been proud to represent such a multicultural part of Queensland and have always stood with people of all faiths and cultures in times of celebration and, sometimes, in times of tragedy. I am extremely distressed by the daily destruction and escalating loss of life of innocent civilians occurring in Palestine. I cannot even begin to describe the hurt being felt by so many people in our community. Even though these events are occurring on the other side of the world, the feelings of devastation and grief are felt very acutely in my local community.

In this time of tragedy I stand with these community members, some of whom have friends and relatives in Palestine, who have also raised their voice for human rights and peace. I strongly feel that as we rightly recognise the loss of life of innocent Israeli citizens—victims of a terrorist attack—so too must we recognise the loss of life of innocent Palestinians, innocent victims—men, women and children—that now number in the thousands. As a nation, we cannot express selective grief. We cannot acknowledge only particular deaths. No civilians are just numbers in a war. I welcome the humanitarian ceasefire and I join with members of my community and the growing international community calling for a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages. I urge that all parties fully comply with international law and international standards.

I acknowledge that longer term work is needed to bring lasting peace to the region. My local community wants to see an end to the conflict and to the loss of life—and so do I. Importantly, I continue to advocate that the ongoing peace and security of Palestinians and Israelis rests in a two-state solution—for self-determination and for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories. I will not pretend to have all the answers, but one thing I know is that a better world is possible. I know this because I see a better world every day in my local community, where people of all faiths and nationalities live side by side in peace and harmony. If anyone ever doubts that a better world is possible, I refer them to the great multicultural communities of our great state. This I know and believe strongly: a child born in Gaza, Israel or the West Bank should have the same opportunity to live a peaceful life as a child born in Kuraby. I look forward to a day, however distant it may feel at times, when children born into all faiths in all parts of the world can live in peace.