

AUSTRALIANS FOR WAR POWERS REFORM

a project of the CAMPAIGN FOR AN IRAQ WAR INQUIRY

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Dear Prime Minister Abbott,

As your government prepares to extend RAAF bombing raids beyond Iraq into Syria, we ask you to reconsider this move before it is too late.

We call on you to hold a debate in Parliament on the impact of bombing on Australia's national interests and on Syrian civilians, followed by a vote on any proposed military action.

Further, we urge you to seek and publish genuinely independent legal opinion as to the legality of this bombing under international law. This should make clear what Australia's likelihood of success before the International Court of Justice would be if another party raised arguments against the legality of the bombing. The government should state that it will accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ should any other state seek to sue Australia in this matter. The government should seek a decision of the Federal Executive Council with an accompanying certificate as to the legality of the proposed action under international law.

The government's objectives in bombing Syria should be made clear and evaluated against our moral obligation to preserve civilian life, together with the prospect that bombing will strengthen Islamic State, and will further divide the Australian community. The implications of a protracted war for Australian service-people and for Australia's international standing should be canvassed.

Even showing support for the United States in such circumstances is the opposite of what a good ally should do. Australia would serve our common interests better by counselling America against becoming bogged down in another illegal, disastrous war.

Yours sincerely,

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