



NCJWA Statement on Malka Leifer Extradition Case

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Melinda Jones
President

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The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJWA) is pleased to hear that Malka Leifer will finally be extradited to Australia to face justice. We stand in support with Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper during this difficult time. We are relieved that Leifer will finally be made to return and answer to the charges laid against her.

The NCJWA is a National Jewish Women's organisation which has a long history of advocating to stop violence against women and children. Child sexual abuse is an abhorrent abuse of power, which can cause lifelong effects both physically and mentally on survivors, as well as on their families. Child sexual abuse also contravenes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the child's rights to safety and to a life of physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social health. Australia is a signatory to this convention and needs to take its responsibilities seriously.

It is important to acknowledge that child abuse, both in homes and in institutions, continues to occur in all walks of life, and in all cultural backgrounds. Around 8% of boys and 19% of girls are sexually abused.^[i] This rate is increasing over time, not decreasing.^[ii] Over 60% of survivors of sexual abuse who spoke with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reported that they experienced sexual abuse in religious institutions – of those, 39% took place in religious schools.^[iii] This is a distressing fact for the Jewish and other religious communities to come to terms with.

In the context of the ongoing matter of the institutional abuse of children, NCJWA calls for the Government of Australia and of the States and Territories, Members of Parliament and Diplomats:

- To continue to put pressure on Israel to bring Malka Leifer to Australia to face justice as soon as possible;
- To bring about legislative changes & implement policies to address the rates of child abuse in our institutions in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual;
- to implement a public health approach to sexual abuse in institutions as recommended in the Royal Commission;
- to be more proactive in funding support services to survivors of child sexual abuse; and

- to provide effective education programs with adequate funding which are accessible and culturally appropriate for all institutions regardless of ethnic, cultural or religious background;

It is a travesty that Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper are still waiting for their day in Court. Now that it has been agreed Leifer can be extradited, the Israeli and Australian governments must work together to expedite her extradition so they do not have to wait any longer.

NCJWA President Melinda Jones is available for further comment on this statement if required.

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ⁱⁱ Gilmore, J. (2017). *Domestic violence half-yearly update: The numbers we need to know*. The Sydney Morning Herald, 05/07/2017

ⁱⁱⁱ Bricknell, S. (2008). *Trends in violent crime*. Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice no. 359. Canberra: AIC

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017). *Final report, Volume 16: Religious Institutions*. Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia