



Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

Affidavit

No. 1503 of 2024

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: New South Wales
Division: General

Peter Wertheim AM and another
Applicants

Wissam Haddad and another
Respondents

Affidavit of: Robert M Goot AO SC
Address: C-/ Deutsch Miller, Level 9, 53 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Occupation: Deputy President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Date: 24 March 2025

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I, Robert M Goot AO SC of C-/ Level 9, 53 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000, Deputy President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (**ECAJ**), say on oath:

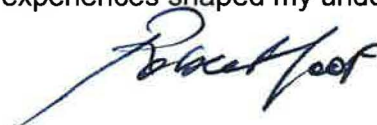
1. I am the Second Applicant in these proceedings.
2. I have known the First Applicant, Peter Wertheim both through the New South Wales Board of Deputies (**Board of Deputies**) and the ECAJ since the 1990s. I consider Peter

Filed on behalf of (name & role of party) Robert M Goot AO SC, the Second Applicant
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to be a colleague and have been in close communication with him since I have known him.

Background

3. I am 78 years of age, and I am Jewish.
4. I have been active in the leadership of the Jewish community both in Australia and overseas for more than 40 years.
5. Being Jewish is a part of my DNA, and it is very important to me. I am a member of a Jewish Synagogue in Sydney and have been throughout my adult life.
6. I was born in New Zealand but became an Australian citizen and have always regarded myself as a proud Australian. I never personally experienced antisemitism growing up and living in Australia, however, I knew from my involvement in the community that antisemitism existed. In my experience, prior to 7 October 2023, antisemitism appeared to exist mostly on the fringes of Australian society, and I did not believe it was mainstream and was something I did not worry about too much. During my adult life, I participated actively in work, social, political and professional circles and have no recollection of ever experiencing any overt antisemitism.
7. Prior to 7 October 2023, I felt I was fully accepted in Australia, and I considered Australia to be a place where Jews participated, flourished, contributed and built a better life in safety. I was, however, of course aware that Jews are a minority. I recall on many occasions prior to 7 October 2023, at overseas Jewish conferences reporting on the positive position of Australian Jewry living in safety and happily integrated in the Australian population acceptance. Our community was the envy of many overseas Jewish communities, but since 7 October 2023, no longer is.
8. The Holocaust is very important in terms of my Jewish identity. It is an integral part of my consciousness as a Jew. The fact the Holocaust occurred highlights for me the need for education, to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again to any minority, and to equip people to better understand who and what Jews are, what they stand for and believe in.
9. My first real exposure to the history of the Holocaust, apart from my reading, was when I went to Israel for the first time at 16 years of age. While I was in Israel, I went to the original Yad Vashem, Museum of the Holocaust. At around the same time I was also a youth speaker, at the annual gathering to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, at the Jewish Community Centre in Sydney. For me these two experiences reinforced in me the critical link between the Holocaust, the importance of Jewish identity and ensuring Jewish survival. These and later experiences shaped my understanding and




consciousness of the Holocaust, and the absolute necessity to prevent anything like it taking place. Antisemitism led to the Holocaust. The Holocaust is a reminder of where society can descend if the evil of antisemitism and hate speech towards Jews, is not controlled.

10. I believe that antisemitism is totally inconsistent with basic Australian values and the fair go. I also believe that antisemitism today is not just an attack on the Jews but undermines society more generally and it will lead to an attack on some other minority tomorrow.

My Involvement with the Jewish Community in Australia

11. The Jewish community in Australia prides itself, amongst other things, on the scope and range of organisations that provide services to and representation for the community. Those organisations include the official roof bodies which respectively speak for the Jewish community at a State and Federal level. In NSW, that roof body is the Board of Deputies. Since 1970, I have been regularly involved with the Board of Deputies and have occupied the executive positions of Honorary Secretary, Vice President and President from 1978 to 1982. Since 1986, I have been an Honorary Life Member of the Board of Deputies which enables me to attend all meetings of the Executive of the Board. This is something that I have regularly done and continue to do.
12. Since the early 1970s, I have been involved with the ECAJ which is the national peak representative roof body of the Jewish community in Australia, the constituents of which are all the State representative roof bodies such as the Board of Deputies in NSW. The affiliates of the ECAJ are the other national Jewish communal organisations. I occupied the executive positions of Honorary Secretary, Vice President, President (2007-2010 and 2013-2016), Immediate Past President (2017-2018) and since 2019, have been the Deputy President of the ECAJ.
13. From 1980 to 2024, I practised as a Barrister. I took silk in 2000.
14. I have been a Vice President of the World Jewish Congress (**WJC**) which is recognised as the international representative organisation for more than 100 national Jewish communities. Currently, I am a member of the WJC Steering Committee, Executive Committee and the Governing Board and, since 2015, I have been Co-Chair of the WJC Policy Council.
15. In addition to the above positions, I have occupied a number of honorary positions in the Jewish community, including the following:
 - (a) From 1972 to 1980 I was Chairman of the Australian Campaign for the Rescue of Soviet Jewry;




- (b) From 1989 to 1996, I was the President of Moriah College, an orthodox religious and co-educational Jewish day school in Sydney;
 - (c) From 1996 to 2000, I was the President of the Sydney Jewish Museum at Darlinghurst in Sydney, recognised as a world class educational and Holocaust memorial institution;
 - (d) Since 2009, I have been a Director of the Conference for Material Claims Against Germany Inc and in 2014, I was elected as a Member of the Leadership Council of the Claims Conference. The Claims Conference, as it is known, has since 1951 been responsible, amongst other things, for administering the funds provided by the German Government for maintaining the welfare of survivors of the Holocaust and providing grants for research, education and documentation about the Holocaust; and
 - (e) Since 2012, I have been the Chairman of the Trustees of Moriah College.
16. I have been recognised for my services to the Jewish community by the appointment by the Governor General as a Member (in 1988) and an Officer (in 2020) in the General Division of the Order of Australia.
17. In 2014, I was recognised by the Algemeiner news agency in its annual list of 100 most influential Jews in the world.
18. Throughout my career, and all my adult life, I have been involved in combatting antisemitism. As an office bearer of the ECAJ, I was involved in the early 2000s, in some racial vilification cases, including against Fredrick Tobin who was a Holocaust denier.

The Speeches

19. In or around mid-November 2023, I first became aware of the speeches delivered by Wissam Haddad by reading about them from reports in the media, and I subsequently complained to the Australian Human Rights Commission. Amongst other newspapers, I read "The Australian" newspaper every day, so I believe that I would have read at the time the several articles published by "The Australian", listed below:
- (a) On 6 November 2023, an article by Alexi Demetriadi and called "*Al Madina Dawah Centre in new hate outburst after Brother Ismail sermon*";
 - (b) On 7 November 2023, an article by Alexi Demetriadi and Stephen Rice, called "*'Kill Jews' hate preacher Wissam Haddad (Abu Ousayd) unmasked as Islamic State backer*";




- (c) On 9 November 2023, and article by Zaina Cheema called *"We can't turn blind eye to extremist, antisemitic hate at home"* annexed and marked **Annexure RG-1**; and
 - (d) On 13 November 2023, an article by Alexi Demetriadi called *"Wissam Haddad doubles down on sermons and spruiks Holocaust comparison"*.
20. I subsequently viewed videos of the speeches in full. From memory, the videos were sent to me by ECAJ staff, and I have since also read the transcripts of the speeches. I have watched the following speeches delivered by Mr Haddad on or around the dates set out below:
- (a) On or about 4 November 2023, The Jews of Al Madina Part 1;
 - (b) On or about 10 November 2023, Murdered by Israel Khutbah Jumma;
 - (c) On 12 November 2023, The Jews of Al Madina Part 2;
 - (d) On 14 November 2023, Media Response to Reality of World Palestine; and
 - (e) On 29 November 2023, The Jews of Al Madina Banu Quraytha Part 3
- (the Speeches).**
21. When I read the articles referred to in paragraph 19 above and then watched the Speeches and read the transcripts, I was very distressed by what I saw, heard and read. I was particularly distressed by the public nature of the Speeches and their content which I regarded as false and containing very demeaning generalisations of the characteristics of Jewish people. The Speeches also included threats to harm and kill Jews and antisemitic conspiracies, canards or tropes. I was distressed because I believed the Speeches repeated deeply offensive antisemitic canards and tropes. I thought that the Speeches humiliated Jews to make them feel ashamed of being Jewish or identifying as a Jew.
22. I found it shocking, menacing and threatening that Mr Haddad was preaching that all Jews should be killed and that Jews were characterised as being, amongst other things, murderous, very rebellious and causing mischief. In my view, the Speeches furthered antisemitic tropes of Jewish money, influence, power, and linked them to nefarious purposes. I thought it was completely beyond the pale that a preacher would be saying that Jews control the media, were filthy, slanderous, troublemakers, murderous cowards, wicked, scheming and treacherous vile people.
23. The Speeches were in my view not just hateful towards Jews, but vicious antisemitism. I was shocked by the Speeches, including that they took place in public and after what I considered to be horrific events in Sydney on 8 to 9 October 2023 directed at Jews. The




Speeches and the comments made by Mr Haddad were horrible and seemed to me to be even more egregious, because they came from a religious leader giving a sermon online.

24. I also found it deeply concerning that Mr Haddad's Speeches were posted online and that some remain online for anyone to read or watch. The videos of Mr Haddad's Speeches were very public and were capable of being "sliced and diced" that is, edited for distribution on social media at a later date.
25. I was deeply concerned that the events of 8 and 9 October 2023 and the Speeches revealed a kind of antisemitism and hatred of Jews that I had not previously recognised as existing in Australia other than on the fringes of society. I believed we were now dealing with a very different manifestation of an age-old hatred. My reaction has been a shattering realisation and fear that antisemitism is much more mainstream and deeply embedded within key sections of the community, than I had previously thought.
26. The Speeches had a dehumanising effect, by describing an entire race of people, in this case Jewish people, in generalised, grossly derogatory and hateful terms - devoid of humanity.
27. After watching the Speeches, I was upset, frightened and very concerned about where this was going to lead Australia, and for the safety and wellbeing of Jews in Australia and Sydney in particular.
28. The Speeches and comments affected me, but as mentioned in paragraph 25 above, they did not affect me in isolation, as I could not divorce them from the events on 8 and 9 October 2023, when an anti-Jewish mob descended on the Sydney Opera House and chanted antisemitic statements. At the time, the Sydney Opera House, in a gesture of sympathy to the victims of the 7 October Hamas attack in Israel, had been illuminated in blue and white, which are the colours of the flag of Israel. Following these events, and despite having a high profile as a Jew, I increasingly found that I was withdrawing from my non-Jewish colleagues and friends, when I am usually an open and social person.
29. I felt intimidated by the Speeches and the comments made by Mr Haddad including my fear of where that could lead, which has caused me for the first time in my life in Australia to think in ways I would never have thought of previously. For example, I now am more cautious about what I say in certain situations. I would certainly think twice about wearing a kippah (a "yarmulke") outside of a synagogue or displaying a Star of David prominently in some situations, out of fear of personal harm or abuse being directed at me. In my communal role and in my social groups, I have spoken to many Jews who have expressed similar concerns for personal safety by not wearing outward displays of their Jewish identities, out of fear for their safety, and how they feel about




what is going on in Australia towards Jews mentioning events including Mr Haddad's Speeches. Many Jews in the community have been made to feel "othered" in the sense of being treated other than as mainstream Australians, which has been a humiliating experience.

30. In light of the recent events that have happened to the Jewish community, including the delivery of the Speeches, similar preachings of Islamic clerics, and other hatred directed towards Jews, I do not recognise Australia as the place that I grew up in and have lived in for more than 6 decades, including as a safe place for Jews to live as equals and practice our religion free from fear and intimidation. I have become quite despondent about the future of this country and for Jews in this country. If I were younger, I would consider leaving Australia unless things got better, including because the Speeches and the comments made by Mr Haddad are a direct assault on Jews, not limited just to our religion, but also on us as a race and culture and who we are as people.
31. The Speeches by Mr Haddad are a manifestation of a new order in Australia that to me makes Australia largely unrecognisable. I now believe that the post October 7, 2023 surge in antisemitism in Australia could not have erupted so quickly, viciously and in so widespread a manner, had it not been there beneath the surface, deeply embedded, all this time.

Sworn by the deponent
at Sydney
in New South Wales
on 24 March 2025
Before me:

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)
)
Signature of deponent

Poppy Carlie Isabella Kambas
Solicitor / Australian legal practitioner
Level 9, 53 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Signature of witness

Annexure RG-1

No. NSD 1503 of 2024

Federal Court of Australia

District Registry: New South Wales

Division: General

PETER WERTHEIM AM and another

Applicants

WISSAM HADDAD and another

Respondents

This is the annexure marked **Annexure RG-1** referred to in the affidavit of Robert M Goot AO SC sworn 24 March 2025.

COMMENTARY

By [ZAINA CHEEMA](#)

We can't turn blind eye to extremist, anti-Semitic hate in Australia



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[355 Comments](#)

12:00am November 09, 2023. Updated 6:58am November 10, 2023

I am a doctor, human rights advocate and secular Australian woman who has spent many years in the Muslim community.

My partner is Jewish, and in my professional life I consult both Muslim and Jewish patients almost daily. Growing up a devout Muslim, I spent years attending mosques and Islamic community centres across Sydney. I studied sharia law, memorised the Koran, performed the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and wore a hijab from the age of 12 to 29.

[I recently travelled to Israel, a country I once denounced as a colonial apartheid state.](#)

At university I joined student marches chanting "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". I recall during one of those marches we arrived at the Israeli embassy. People were shouting "shame". I felt a knot in my stomach – something about the energy of the crowd had grown hateful.

But it's only now, since the October 7 attacks, that I understand what that intuitive gut feeling meant: there is an additional malevolence in today's anti-Semitism. It comes in the form of hatred towards Israel.

For decades secular Muslims have been forced out of Muslim communities for their divergent views and irreligious lifestyle. This has led to communities becoming more insular over time, where hardline and intolerant rhetoric creates a culture of exclusionism, racism, misogyny, homophobia and anti-Semitism.

We have seen the rise of Islamic extremism across the globe and Australia is in no way safe from that threat. In our society there are hateful men brainwashing their communities to murder civilians based on their religion and oppose the core values that make Australia an incredible country.

Multiculturalism is worth fighting for and the fight has arrived.

[Debate has been ignited across the nation following the hateful comments](#) of brainwashed cleric “Brother Ismail”, who said: “The flag of ISIS and al-Qa’ida is the flag of the Muslim community.” Yet another cleric from the Al Madinah Dawah Centre, Abu Ousayd, also known as Wissam Haddad, has now posted a video denigrating Jews and justifying the impending end-times murder of Jews by Muslims quoting a religious prophecy.

There is no place in Australia for these extremist views or this version of Islam. Given the Al Madinah Dawah Centre’s support for terrorism and anti-Semitism, there must be an immediate suspension of activities and events there along with a review of all personnel affiliated with the organisation. The comments that emerged from the centre should bring a sense of shame to Muslims.

I remember when I was a practising Muslim, whenever I heard hate speech such as this reported in the media it filled me with shame and anxiety. I internalised the negativity and the Islamophobia directed at me.

I did not feel empowered to speak up then; I did not have a voice then. But today I do and I want to use it to call out what I see as extremist and incendiary behaviour that runs counter to the national interest.

Since October 7 there has been a deafening silence across much of Australia’s Muslim community. Only a few have condemned Hamas. In my view this highlights the dangerous rise of political and radical Islam. The Lebanese Muslim Association and patrons of the Lakemba mosque in southwestern Sydney – some of the most influential Muslim organisations in this country – have not condemned Hamas. We must ask why.

[The NSW Legislative Assembly member for Bankstown](#), Jihad Dib, who represents a suburb in Sydney with a significant Muslim community, gave a heartfelt and

compassionate speech to the state parliament that should set the tone for our religious leaders to follow.

Sheik Ibrahim Dadoun, a mainstream preacher and key member of United Muslims of Australia, stoked raucous crowds with a tone of elation and celebration following the murderous actions of Hamas. He holds four degrees and was, until recently, PR director at the Australian National Imams Council. This man's words and actions cannot be ignored and must be denounced from across the Muslim community. They cannot be allowed to go unanswered; these communities must have the courage to stand against hate, not hide behind claims of "armed resistance".

Hamas has been denounced by leading Islamic authorities, including the internationally recognised Islamic Fatwa Council. This alone should make clear to Muslims there is no place for Hamas apologists.

Jihadist groups prey on Australian religious communities. Their game is simple: to isolate vulnerable individuals from the wider community, radicalise them and then use them to further their own political agendas. It's worth exploring their sources of funding. It's also vital these extremists feel the full weight of the law, and law enforcement works to update our counter-terrorism laws to prevent this type of violent hate culture and civil unrest in Australia.

I do not agree, however, with the deportation of religious extremists. These jihadists must be studied and deradicalised if we are to deal strategically with the broader risk of extremism and security. Many former radicals, including "son of Hamas" Mosab Hassan Yousef, have become the greatest activists against extremist Islam. Yousef's father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, was a co-founder of Hamas.

In medicine we know all diseases must be treated at their core; bandages only stop the bleeding. It gets you out of the intensive care unit but not out of hospital. Exporting the problem only risks delivering it to a population more susceptible to radicalisation, only to have them return to our doorstep once again.

[This has been a recurrent issue across Europe.](#) Our Muslim youth – who often feel caught between Australian values and what's being preached to them – must know they are Australian. They must know they were born here, that they're part of the

fabric of our country and that they are loved. We must not allow fanatical clerics to convince them otherwise.

Our Jewish community must also know they are supported, especially as the general atmosphere of anti-Semitism continues to rise. We must come together to root out fringe clerics – expose them for who and what they truly are – so our multicultural country is never divided.

Zaina Cheema is a general practitioner in Sydney.

MORE ON THIS STORY



Not every silence is a sign of latent anti-Semitism

By JANET ALBRECHTSEN



'Holocaust inversion': how a Covid conspiracy fired up anti-Semitism

By ELLIE DUDLEY



Why the silence over anti-Semitism among our doctors?

By SARAH B



I recently travelled to Israel, a country I once denounced as a colonial apartheid state

By RACHEL BAXENDALE



ZAINA CHEEMA CONTRIBUTOR

NOTICE OF FILING

Details of Filing

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sia Lagos".

Registrar

Important Information

This Notice has been inserted as the first page of the document which has been accepted for electronic filing. It is now taken to be part of that document for the purposes of the proceeding in the Court and contains important information for all parties to that proceeding. It must be included in the document served on each of those parties.

The date of the filing of the document is determined pursuant to the Court's Rules.