



Prime Minister

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 18-19 Oct 2010

Tabled Document 5

By: *Senator Barnett*

Date: *18/10/10*

2 AUG 2010

Mr Bruce Quedley
Regional Director
Open Doors (New Zealand) Incorporated
P O Box 27630, Mt Roskill
AUCKLAND 1440

Dear Mr Quedley

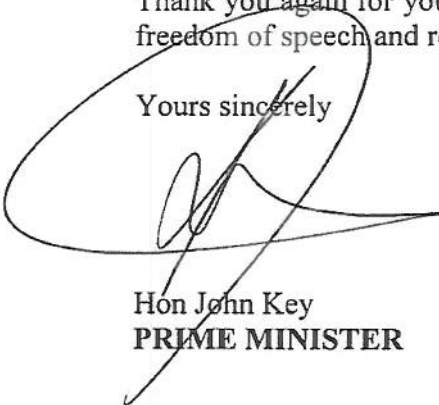
Thank you for your letter of 13 July 2010 seeking an assurance that New Zealand will not vote in support of the Defamation of Religions Resolution at the United Nations General Assembly. I note that you have also written to Hon Simon Power, Hon Murray McCully and Hon Peter Dunne on this matter. I am replying on behalf of the government.

I can provide that assurance. The New Zealand Government considers that resolutions such as this could be used to constrain freedom of speech. New Zealand is firmly committed to freedom of speech as a central tenet of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Your letter says that it is vital that in our interconnected world we all speak respectfully to and about other faiths. I agree. We actively support initiatives that promote religious tolerance, particularly in our part of the world. For example, we co-sponsor the Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue process. The purpose of this dialogue is to promote greater understanding and cooperation between different communities, thereby addressing some of the potential causes of religious and inter-communal conflict. All ASEAN countries, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Fiji are involved in the Dialogue. Each country nominates a ten-person delegation to represent it at the annual meeting which concludes with a declaration describing achievements and making recommendations.

Thank you again for your letter and for your organisation's continued commitment to freedom of speech and religious tolerance.

Yours sincerely



Hon John Key
PRIME MINISTER