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## Albanese Stands Firm on Palestinian Statehood Timing

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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has reaffirmed that Australia will not be rushed into recognizing Palestinian statehood, emphasizing that any decision will be based on national interest and specific security-related conditions. In a recent interview, he stated that recognition must contribute to a genuine path toward peace and not serve as a symbolic gesture. He outlined clear prerequisites, including the demilitarisation of a future Palestinian state, internal reforms within the Palestinian Authority, and the exclusion of Hamas from governing Gaza.

Albanese acknowledged recent commitments made by the Palestinian Authority, including the recognition of Israel's right to exist, a pledge to hold democratic elections within a year of statehood, and opposition to Hamas involvement. However, he stressed that these commitments must be meaningfully implemented before Australia would consider formal recognition. He also rejected foreign-imposed timelines, such as those proposed by Canada, France, and the United Kingdom, which have expressed a willingness to consider recognition during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

The Prime Minister's comments come as international pressure mounts, with 147 countries already recognizing Palestine. Despite this, Albanese maintained that Australia's decision will be guided by Cabinet deliberations and security considerations. Treasurer Jim Chalmers echoed this view, describing recognition as inevitable but emphasizing the importance of appropriate timing and conditions. Opposition foreign affairs spokesperson Senator Michaelia Cash criticized any move to consider recognition while Hamas retains control in Gaza and holds Israeli hostages. She argued that such a step would be premature and could undermine efforts to secure peace and accountability. The government's cautious stance reflects a broader strategy of ensuring that recognition aligns with stability in the region and Australia's diplomatic priorities.