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## Albanese Accuses Netanyahu of Gaza Denial

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CANBERRA / JERUSALEM – Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has harshly criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing him of being "in denial" about the consequences of Israel's military campaign in Gaza.

Albanese's comment follows reports that Australia is considering recognition of a Palestinian state at the upcoming UN General Assembly, a move prompted in part by concern over the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In an ABC News interview, Albanese recounted a recent conversation with Netanyahu in which he said the Israeli leader dismissed civilian suffering in Gaza. Albanese added that more military action "will not produce a different outcome."

Reports suggest that Australia's potential recognition would align with countries like France, Canada, and the UK, signaling a possible shift toward supporting a two-state solution. Albanese remained steadfast that "the risk of trying is nothing compared to the danger of letting this moment pass us by," framing recognition as a moral imperative and an effort to break the cycle of violence in the Middle East.

Israeli officials criticized Albanese, with some statements reportedly calling him a "weak politician" for his comments. The exchange has increased diplomatic tensions, including visa restrictions and public denunciations from both sides.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) condemned both leaders for their inflammatory rhetoric, warning that it exposes the Jewish community to unwanted backlash. In letters to both prime ministers, the ECAJ urged calm, appealing for diplomatic dialogue instead of political posturing.

The exchange represents a notable diplomatic disagreement, with analysts warning of potential complications in relations between allies. Reports indicate that Israel revoked visas for some Australian diplomats and that Australia restricted entry for certain visiting Israeli delegations amid the diplomatic tensions.

Australia, meanwhile, has continued to push for a humanitarian response in Gaza and reaffirmed its support for a two-state resolution. Earlier this year, Foreign Minister Penny Wong expressed Australia's concern over Israeli military action in Gaza while supporting allied measures targeting some hardline Israeli officials.