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## PM Brands Israel's Gaza Plan a 'Human Catastrophe'

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Australia's Prime Minister (PM) has issued a strong rebuke of Israel's newly approved strategy to reoccupy Gaza, warning that its implementation could unleash a "human catastrophe." The PM emphasised the urgent need for restraint, international accountability, and a renewed focus on diplomatic channels and civilian protection.

The Prime Minister's remarks follow Israel's Security Cabinet greenlighting a plan to seize control of Gaza City and reassert its authority over the Gaza Strip. While Israeli leadership says the aim is to dismantle Hamas's influence and restore security, critics including the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have condemned the plan as a grave escalation with catastrophic implications for Gaza's civilian population. Australia's Foreign Minister reiterated this position, joining counterparts from Germany, Italy, New

Zealand and the United Kingdom in a joint statement denouncing the plan. They warned the move could exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, impede the delivery of essential aid, and violate international humanitarian law.

Domestically, the criticism extended across the political spectrum. A spokesperson for the governing Coalition defended Israel's sovereign right to conduct military operations while condemning Hamas's role in the hostilities. Yet other Coalition figures—such as the home affairs spokesman—urged caution, citing the risk of mounting military casualties and the absence of a clear endgame.

Analysts warn that controlling Gaza City could trigger mass displacement. Some projections estimate that hundreds of thousands of civilians may be forced to flee or face lethal consequences. Estimates of pre-war Gaza City population range up to 650,000 residents, raising serious fears about the operation's human cost.

Meanwhile, the UN has signaled intent to call an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the matter. The international community remains watchful, with diplomatic pressure mounting for alternative, negotiation-driven measures.

The Australian PM's firm stance underscores a commitment to balanced, law-based international engagement. As regional tensions heighten, the call for diplomatic solutions, two-state outcomes, and civilian safeguards gain renewed urgency.