

Albanese Faces Netanyahu's Sharp Rebuke

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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has responded to a sharp diplomatic clash with Israel after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched a personal attack over Australia's support for recognizing a Palestinian state.

The dispute escalated after Canberra announced it would move toward recognition and refused a visa to a far-right Israeli politician. In response, Israel expelled Australia's representatives from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Netanyahu accused Albanese of weakening ties and betraying Israel. "History will remember Albanese for what he is: a weak politician who betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews," Netanyahu wrote in a post on social media. In a letter circulated by the Australian Jewish Association, Netanyahu further argued that the Australian stance "pours fuel on this antisemitic fire." He gave Albanese a deadline of September 23, 2025, the Jewish New Year, to reverse the decision.

"Prime Minister, antisemitism is a cancer. It spreads when leaders stay silent. It retracts when leaders act," Netanyahu said in the letter, urging Albanese to replace "appeasement with resolve."

Albanese responded calmly, telling reporters in Adelaide that he would not take the comments personally. "I treat leaders of other countries with respect and I diplomatically engage with them," he said. "He has had similar things to say about other leaders."

The Prime Minister stressed that Australians expect a balanced approach that promotes peace abroad while preventing conflict at home. "People want to see an end to the cycle of violence that we have seen for far too long. That is what Australians want to see as well," he said.

Opposition Leader Sussan Ley criticized Albanese's handling of the issue, calling it evidence of broader failures in international relations. "Anthony Albanese has mismanaged international relationships to the point where he now finds himself at the center of a troubling diplomatic incident," she said. Ley added that respect in diplomacy "is a two-way street" and pressed Albanese to explain how he planned to repair ties with Israel.

Albanese maintained that his government would continue to pursue a diplomatic course that reflects Australian values while attempting to stabilize relations. "Australians want two things. They want the cycle of violence to stop, and they do not want conflict brought here," he said.

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke defended the Prime Minister, accusing Netanyahu of overreacting. "Strength is not measured by how many people you can blow up, or how many children you can leave hungry," Burke told ABC Radio. He argued that Albanese's willingness to address Israel directly on difficult issues demonstrates political strength.

Burke warned that Netanyahu's rhetoric risked further isolating Israel internationally. "That is not in their interests either," he said.

The diplomatic row underscores the political challenges facing Albanese's government in balancing international alliances, domestic expectations, and Australia's broader foreign policy strategy. The incident has already sparked significant debate within Canberra, where both government and opposition leaders recognize the strain but differ sharply on how to respond.