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Wong Rebukes Opposition's 'Unrealistic' Gaza Stance

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Foreign Minister Penny Wong sharply criticized the opposition's Gaza demands as "divorced from reality," as senior senators clashed over Australia's move toward recognizing a Palestinian state.

On July 30, 2025, Foreign Minister Penny Wong, representing the Australian Labor Party, dismissed the opposition's demands regarding the Gaza crisis as impractical and out of touch, according to Sky News Australia. The rebuke came amid heated Senate debates, with senior Liberal and Labor senators at odds over the Albanese government's gradual

shift toward recognizing a Palestinian state. Wong emphasized that any recognition must ensure no role for Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, and align with a two-state solution, as outlined in a joint statement by 15 nations, including Australia, per Euronews. She stressed that peace hinges on a viable Palestinian Authority and condemned Hamas for holding hostages, a point she reiterated to ABC News.

The opposition, led by Senator Jonno Duniam, argued that the government's focus on Palestinian statehood overlooks Hamas's role in exacerbating Gaza's humanitarian crisis, including aid theft, as reported by The Times of Israel. Duniam told Sky News that Wong's approach risks "rewarding terrorism" by not prioritizing Hamas's accountability, calling for stronger measures against the group. This clash reflects broader tensions, with the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) praising Australia's cautious stance compared to the United Kingdom's plan to recognize Palestine by September unless Israel halts its Gaza operations, per AIJAC's July 30 statement. AIJAC's Executive Director, Dr. Colin Rubenstein, warned that premature recognition could delay peace by emboldening Hamas.

Wong's comments followed a call with United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer, where both leaders urged an immediate ceasefire and increased aid to Gaza, citing United Nations (UN) reports of widespread starvation, with one in five children affected. The Australian government has joined 27 nations in condemning Israel's aid restrictions, which have led to nearly 1,000 civilian deaths since May, including 100 in one weekend, according to GOV.UK. However, Wong maintained that Australia's position balances humanitarian concerns with security, rejecting opposition claims as lacking nuance. The ongoing debate highlights the challenge of navigating international pressure while addressing domestic divisions over Gaza's future.