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## Kostakidis Faces Court Over Hezbollah Posts

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Former SBS newsreader Mary Kostakidis is embroiled in a federal court case after the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) accused her of breaching the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA). The controversy stems from her sharing social media posts about a speech by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, which the ZFA claims could offend people of Israeli origin. Kostakidis is seeking to dismiss the case, arguing the claim lacks specificity.

The ZFA's barrister, Michael Borsky KC, argued that Kostakidis' actions could reasonably offend Israelis or those of Israeli descent, falling under Section 18C of the RDA. He emphasised that while criticising Israel is not inherently antisemitic, certain statements can cross into racial vilification. Borsky dismissed Kostakidis' defence that the claim was too vague, asserting the victim group, people of Israeli national origin, was clearly defined. The case hinges on whether her posts, including commentary accusing Israel of "genocide," endorsed Hezbollah's rhetoric.

Kostakidis' legal team contends the ZFA's case is flawed, failing to identify which racial or ethnic group was targeted. They argue the claim is overly broad, as Jewish identity and Israeli nationality are not interchangeable. However, Borsky countered that the distinction is irrelevant, insisting the posts could still offend Israelis. The court also heard allegations that Kostakidis promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories, including claims of a Nazi-Zionist alliance, a claim set to be examined in detail if the case proceeds to trial.

Justice Stephen McDonald has reserved his decision, leaving both sides awaiting a ruling on whether the case will advance. The outcome could set a significant precedent on the limits of free speech versus racial vilification in Australia. With tensions high over the Israel-Hamas conflict, the court's judgment will be closely watched, potentially reshaping how inflammatory rhetoric is treated under Australian law. For now, the debate over where criticism ends and discrimination begins remains unresolved.