

Australia's prime minister demands full accountability over death of Gaza aid worker

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Canberra, April 2 (RHC)-- Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has demanded "full accountability" over the death of Australian aid worker Zomi Frankcom in Gaza. Frankcom was one of four international

aid workers that Palestinian officials say were killed along with their Palestinian driver on Monday in an Israeli air attack in central Gaza's Deir el-Balah.

Speaking at a news conference in Brisbane, Albanese said Frankcom's death was "completely unacceptable" and "beyond any reasonable circumstances." "This news today is tragic. DFAT have also requested a call-in from the Israeli ambassador as well," Albanese said, referring to Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"We want full accountability for this. This is a tragedy that should never have occurred."

"The truth is that this is beyond any reasonable circumstances that someone going about providing aid and humanitarian assistance should lose their life, and there were four aid workers as well as a Palestinian driver in this vehicle," Albanese added.

Albanese also reiterated calls for a "sustainable ceasefire." "Australians want to see an end to this conflict," he said.

DFAT said earlier in a statement that Australia has been "very clear that we expect humanitarian workers in Gaza to have safe and unimpeded access to do their lifesaving work."

Frankcom had worked at the United States-based aid organisation World Central Kitchen since 2019, most recently serving as senior manager for Asia operations in Bangkok, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Those killed in Monday's attack also include a British and a Polish national, according to Gaza officials.

WCK founder Jose Andres confirmed on social media that "several" of the organisation's staff had been killed in an Israel air attack, saying he was "heartbroken and grieving for their families and friends and our whole WCK family".

Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary, reporting from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah, where the deceased's remains were taken, said she had spoken with the aid workers earlier in the day. "Everyone in the hospital is amazed and astonished. They don't believe Israeli forces targeted internationals," Khoudary said.

The Israeli military has said it is investigating "to understand all the circumstances of the incident" and that it makes "extensive efforts to enable the safe delivery of humanitarian aid."

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