

Australia summons Israeli envoy over aid worker killed in Gaza airstrike

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A slain employee from the World Central Kitchen (WCK) who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Dayr al-Balah, in the Gaza Strip on April 2, 2024.

Canberra, April 2 (RHC)-- Australia has summoned the Israeli ambassador over the killing of an Australian aid worker in an airstrike on Gaza, which Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described as “completely unacceptable.” Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has “requested a call-in from the Israeli ambassador,” Albanese said on Tuesday. “We want full accountability for this. This is a tragedy that should never have occurred,” he added.

Australian citizen Zomi Frankcom was among the seven aid workers who were killed in an Israeli airstrike in central Gaza on Monday. Citizens from Britain and Poland, and a dual citizen of the United States and Canada were also among the victims who were working for the World Central Kitchen.

The World Central Kitchen said its aid workers were traveling in a “deconflicted zone” in two armored cars branded with the charity’s logo as well as “a soft skin vehicle.” Despite coordinating movements with the Israeli military, “the convoy was hit as it was leaving the Deir al-Balah warehouse, where the team had unloaded more than 100 tons of humanitarian food aid brought to Gaza on the maritime route,” the group said in a statement.

Albanese said: “The truth is that this is beyond any reasonable circumstances that someone going about providing aid and humanitarian assistance should lose their life.” The premier also reiterated calls for a “sustainable ceasefire”, saying, “Australians want to see an end to this conflict.”

Earlier, DFAT said 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.”

Erin Gore, chief executive of World Central Kitchen, said: "This is not only an attack against WCK. This is an attack on humanitarian organizations showing up in the most dire of situations where food is being used as a weapon of war. This is unforgivable."

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli intensified violence against Palestinians.

Tel Aviv has also blocked water, food, and electricity to Gaza, plunging the coastal strip into a humanitarian crisis.

Since the start of the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 32,845 Palestinians and injured nearly 75,392 others.

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