



Confrontations over Gaza make politicians feel unsafe, says minister

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Highlight: Anne Aly said the confrontation with pro-Palestinian activists in a park last weekend was not the first, but was the most intense clash she had experienced.

Body

Early Education Minister Anne Aly has warned that heightened tensions in the community over the war in Gaza have forced some politicians to retreat from public events, following a heated exchange she had with pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Perth last Saturday.

Footage emerged on Tuesday of Aly - who is one of two Muslim frontbenchers - confronted by pro-Palestine activists in her inner-north Perth electorate the previous weekend, demanding she label Israel's retaliatory strikes against Gaza since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack as genocide.

[Link to Image](#)

Alex Ellinghausen

While the protesters raised their voices aggressively, Aly was not physically attacked.

Aly told ABC Radio National on Friday she often holds an open office in the park on weekends for people in her electorate who cannot visit her office during working hours. She said the conflict with protesters - organised by Friends of Palestine WA - was not the first but was the most intense clash she had experienced.

"Many of my colleagues have faced similar or worse to the point that many of them have had to stop doing open air offices, which I think you know, is a real shame for those members of the community who need to have open access to their federal members," Aly said.

Since the October 7 attack, multiple ministers including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Defence Minister Richard Marles, NDIS Minister Bill Shorten as well as Labor backbencher Peter Khalil had their electorate offices defaced with graffiti, signs and fake dead bodies, which Aly believed had a chilling effect on politicians being able to do their work.

"When I go out into my community there are a variety of issues that people want to talk to me about," she said.

"The situation in Gaza is also one of those issues that people want me to advocate on and want me to speak up about, and so I want to be able to speak up about them."

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The US on Friday (AEDT) announced that it planned to put a resolution calling for an immediate truce in Gaza to a vote of the UN Security Council, intensifying pressure on Israel.

Washington, which traditionally has shielded Israel at the UN, has incrementally applied more pressure to its longtime ally, and the draft Security Council resolution marked a further toughening.

The shift has coincided with rising global condemnation of the five-month-old war, Palestinian civilian deaths, and the prospect of a man-made famine in Gaza.

Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, killing 1200 people and taking more than 200 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's offensive since then has killed almost 32,000 Palestinians, according to Hamas-run Gaza health authorities.

Australia has since December supported the UN's call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the restoration of aid to people trapped in the war zone, but has not explicitly condemned Israel.

Both Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong have said several times that Israel has a right to defend itself.

On October 19, Aly backed senior federal minister Ed Husic, a fellow Muslim, when he said Palestinians were being "collectively punished for Hamas' barbarism".

Aly said there were greater expectations placed on herself and other Muslim MPs.

"I've actually had Muslim leaders sending me messages of support and one of them yesterday said, 'you know, to be honest, it is because you're a Muslim woman, you're coping more than anyone else'," she said.

"I wouldn't want to say it's just because of that, but I do think that there are certain expectations on me."

Aggressive and violent incidents involving federal MPs have been under the spotlight previously, when in 2019 a bipartisan group of parliamentarians warned that [Australia's increasingly toxic political debate](#) could lead to tragic consequences.

Earlier this week, Liberal senator and former ambassador to Israel [Dave Sharma warned of lasting damage](#) to society from a rise in threats to Jewish Australians and other minorities, declaring that everyone would lose if nothing was done to stop mob attacks.

Friends of Palestine Western **Australia** have been contacted for comment.

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Graphic

Minister for Early Childhood Education **Anne Aly**.

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