

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: For PMO awareness: Israeli sanctions announcement [SEC=PROTECTED]
Date: Monday, 9 June 2025 6:34:52 PM

Thanks, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent from my iPhone

On 9 Jun 2025, at 6:00 pm, s 22(1)(a)(ii) wrote:

PROTECTED

Evening s 22(1)(a)(ii) and s 22(1)(a)(ii),

PM&C received a **short turnaround red line check** from DFAT for the **UK-led joint announcement on Israeli sanctions**.

The text is attached with comments from FMO and DFAT. s 47C

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | A/g Senior Adviser
Middle East, Africa & Multilateral Policy | International Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
p. s 22(1)(a)(ii) | m. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

<High Level Measures - Statement by Foreign Ministers - draft - AUS
comments - 1600 9 June 2025.docx>

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Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MEDIA TALKING POINTS
DISTRIBUTION: STANDARD

Topic: HUMAN RIGHTS

Originating Division: MAD

Subject: Sanctions on Israeli ministers

Version Date: 10/6/2025

Reason for Update: New talking points

Version: 0.03

Expiry: 10/09/2025

Talking Points

- Australia has announced sanctions on Israel's National Security Minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, and Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich for serious human rights abuses
 - these ministers have been responsible for, and complicit in, settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank
 - they are the most extreme proponents of the Israeli settlement enterprise.
- There is clear and irrefutable evidence widely available in the public domain that shows these ministers' responsibility for, and complicity in, these serious abuses of human rights
 - including regular, systematic and escalating physical violence and abuse by Israeli settlers.
- Today's measures are targeted towards individuals who undermine Israel's own security and its standing in the world.
- They will be subject to financial sanctions and travel bans under Australia's Magnitsky-style human rights framework.
- These sanctions make it a criminal offence for Australians and Australian companies to:
 - supply an asset directly or indirectly to the sanctioned individuals, and
 - use or deal with assets owned or controlled by the sanctioned individuals.
- We have applied these measures in coordination with Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom.

Why now?

- Israel continues to approve new settlements

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- on 29 May 2025 it announced 22 new settlements, the largest expansion in decades.
- Settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank is at the highest levels in at least 20 years.
- Serious human rights abuses are used to perpetuate the settlement enterprise
 - settlements are illegal under international law and a barrier to sustainable peace.
- Ministers Ben Gvir and Smotrich are extreme proponents of the settlement enterprise
 - using their positions to foster the environment in which these attacks happen
 - commentary and actions by both are inflammatory and unjustifiable.
- We have sanctioned extremist settlers due to settler violence before [July 2024]
 - and will deny any identified extremist settler a visa to travel to Australia.

Why these two individuals?

- These individuals have been responsible for, and complicit in, settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.
- They have threatened Palestinians and undermined the viability of a negotiated two-state solution
 - Itamar Ben-Gvir has legitimised and condoned violence against Palestinians
 - Bezalel Smotrich has provided settlers engaging in violence against Palestinians with legitimacy and administrative backing to advance his goal of Israel annexing the West Bank.
- These sanctions on these individuals, in their personal capacity, reinforce the Australian Government's consistent condemnation of settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank
 - our longstanding position is that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace
 - we want Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements and respond to extremist settler activity.

Settlements

- The Government's longstanding position is that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law and a significant obstacle to peace
 - consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2334 [2016] which determined settlements have no legal validity and constitute a 'flagrant violation' of international law.
- We are deeply concerned by Israel's decisions in recent months to approve new settlements, including its 29 May 2025 announcement approving 22 new settlements, the largest expansion in decades.

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- Violence in support of the settlement enterprise is unacceptable and perpetrators must be held to account.
- We continue to urge all parties to refrain from activities that diminish the prospects for a negotiated two-state solution.

Effect of sanctions

- These sanctions impose targeted financial sanctions on Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and bar them from travelling to Australia
 - this means anyone holding assets belonging to Ben-Gvir or Smotrich must freeze them, and providing assets to them, even indirectly, is a criminal offence.
 - financial support or other contributions to political parties led by Ben-Gvir or Smotrich could also contravene sanctions laws.
- Acknowledge sanctions impose costs on the Australian community
 - including activities by Australians and Australian companies
- Any Australian seeking to engage with Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, or organisations associated with them, should conduct due diligence using public guidance available on the DFAT Australian Sanctions Office website, and obtain legal advice if necessary.

Are these sanctions in response to [specific comment X by Ben-Gvir/Smotrich] on annexation of settlements in the West Bank?

- These sanctions have been carefully considered
 - on the basis that they meet the legal criteria of our Magnitsky-style human rights framework.
- These two individuals were found to have been responsible for, and complicit in, human rights abuses in the West Bank.
- The Australian Government's guiding principle has always been the pursuit of a just and enduring peace in the form of a two-state solution.

Is Australia's assessment that the two ministers have breached international law?

- These sanctions were made under Australia's domestic Magnitsky-style human rights framework on the basis that these individuals were responsible for, and complicit in, human rights abuses in the West Bank.
- They are a targeted and measured response to the individuals' involvement in settler violence in the West Bank.
- They demonstrate Australia's commitment to upholding human rights and holding human rights abusers to account.

Why did it take so long for the Government to impose sanctions against these two Israeli ministers?

- These sanctions have been imposed following careful consideration

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- including the evidence that these two individuals meet the legal criteria of the Magnitsky-style human rights framework.
- The situation has continued to deteriorate.
- They are a targeted and measured response to the actions of these individuals who have been responsible for and complicit in settler violence in the West Bank.
- They build on actions already taken by the Government in relation to settler violence, including
 - consistent condemnation of illegal settlements in the West Bank
 - denying visas to Australia for anyone identified as an extremist settler, and
 - the imposition of sanctions against extremist settlers in July 2024.

What other actions has the Australian Government taken prior to imposing sanctions against these two Israeli ministers?

- These sanctions reinforce the Australian Government's consistent condemnation of the expansion of settlements and our deep concern with ongoing settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.
- Our long-standing position is that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace
 - in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2334 [2016] which determined settlements have no legal validity and constitute a 'flagrant violation' of international law.
- These sanctions build on our response to human rights abuses in the West Bank, including
 - our commitment to deny anyone identified as an extremist settler a visa to travel to Australia
 - and Magnitsky-style human rights sanctions imposed in response to settler violence by seven extremist settlers and an entity, in July 2024.
- Australia continues to express its grave concern about settlement activity to Israel both publicly and privately
 - we want Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements and respond to extremist settler activity.

Is Australia turning its back on Israel / concerned about Israeli retaliation?

- No. Australia is and remains a longstanding friend of Israel and the Israeli people.
- These measures target two individuals who, through their responsibility for and complicity in, human rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank are undermining sustainable peace and security for the Israeli people.
- Our position on settlements and violent settlers is longstanding and clear.

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- We remain unwavering in our support for the Israeli people, the State of Israel, and its security
 - these individuals are isolating Israel from its friends and partners, and undermining the interests of the Israeli people.
- These sanctions are against these individuals in their personal capacity, not against the Israeli Government.

Did the Government advise the US or Israel ahead of this sanctions action?

- Australia and the United States have a longstanding alliance
 - and we maintain regular communication through multiple channels on matters of mutual importance.
- Australia and Israel have a longstanding relationship and maintain constructive dialogue.

Will Australia impose sanctions against other Israeli citizens (settlers or senior officials)?

- Sanctions are a foreign policy tool and just one of a suite of possible measures the Australian Government considers in responding to a situation of international concern.
- We do not speculate on potential sanctions.

If raised: Will Australia ban other Israeli ministers from Australia or deny them a visa?

- We do not speculate about potential visa refusals or sanctions measures.
- Under the Migration Act, the Minister for Home Affairs has the power to refuse a visa to anyone who fails to meet character requirements.
- The Minister for Foreign Affairs has the power to determine that a person's presence in Australia is contrary to Australia's foreign policy interests, which means that person will not be granted a visa.

Are these / why aren't these sanctions in response to the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza?

- These individuals have been sanctioned as they have been responsible for and complicit in settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.
- The Government has been consistent in calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, for the release of all hostages, for Hamas to have no role in the future and for the flow of humanitarian aid to people in Gaza.

Has Australia imposed sanctions in response to the 7 October Hamas terrorist attacks?

- Australia has already taken strong action and imposed counter-terrorism financing sanctions in relation to Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hizballah.

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s 47E(d) , s 33(a)(iii)

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Handling Notes

Media Interest

Yes - media interest is expected to be high, as will reactions from international partners and organisations.

s 33(b)