# Australian Senator Fatima Payman Accuses Global Leaders of 'Gaslighting' Over Israel-Palestine Conflict



Australian Senator Fatima Payman, aged 28, recently ignited controversy by accusing global leaders of "gaslighting" over the Israel-Palestine conflict, which she described as a "genocide." Payman sparked this debate during parliamentary sittings, criticizing Israel's actions in Gaza and questioning how many international laws Israel must break before Australia acknowledges the situation.

This led to a united condemnation from both the Coalition and Labor Party, urging members to refrain from inflammatory language. Despite this, Payman garnered support from Senator Lidia Thorpe, an Independent who left the Greens over differing views regarding the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. Thorpe criticized Labor's treatment of Payman, describing it as "appalling" and defended the slogan “from the river to the sea” as an anti-apartheid message rather than a call for violence against Israelis.

The controversy arose within the backdrop of Israel's ground invasion of Gaza, following a deadly attack by Hamas on October 7 that resulted in 1,200 deaths and 250 hostages. Israel’s retaliatory actions have reportedly resulted in over 35,000 Palestinian casualties. Israel rejects the genocide characterization, arguing its actions target Hamas militants, not civilians.

In the Senate, Foreign Minister Penny Wong reiterated Labor's support for a two-state solution, stating that it is crucial for the peace and security of both Israelis and Palestinians. During a UN vote, Labor also backed Palestine’s membership bid, drawing criticism from the Coalition for allegedly supporting Hamas.

Senator Payman, whose family fled Afghanistan when she was eight, emphasized her commitment to raising her voice for Palestinian rights, mirroring her advocacy for working-class values inspired by her family's struggles in Australia.