Senior Official: Australia Will Press ICC to Avoid Attacks Against Israel

February 26, 2017

By [Herb Keinon](http://www.jpost.com/Author/Herb-Keinon)

The Jerusalem Post

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Australia-will-press-ICC-to-avoid-attacks-against-Israel-says-top-official-482624>

Australia is willing to be an “important player” in keeping pressure on the International Criminal Court so it is not used as a vehicle to attack Israel, a senior diplomatic official said Sunday, shortly after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [met with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop.](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-meets-with-Aussie-FM-against-imposing-PA-state-on-Israel-482605)

Bishop, according to the official, committed Australia to continue defending Israel in hostile international forums, as it has done until now.

The official said Netanyahu is trying to put together a group of nations that – in addition to the United States under President Donald Trump – would both take a more aggressive tone against Iran and also block efforts to castigate Israel in various international forums.

Netanyahu met Bishop shortly before leaving Australia after a five-day visit. In that meeting, he raised the issue of Gaza to illustrate how unrealistic it is at this time to talk about a Palestinian state.

Bishop asked Netanyahu to explain comments he made upon his arrival to Australia, when he responded to the calls by two former Australian prime ministers for Canberra to recognize a Palestinian state by replying: “What kind of state will it be that they are advocating? A state that calls for Israel’s destruction? A state whose territory will be used immediately for radical Islam?” Netanyahu told Bishop that under any possible scenario – including a two-state solution – “Israel will have to retain ultimate security control.”

When Bishop asked whether there might be an alternative to Israeli security control, Netanyahu responded: “Is anyone willing to go into Gaza? Is there a force in the world to do it?” he asked. “We left Gaza, and Hamas entered,” he said. “Who is going to go in there to ensure that this does not happen?” Netanyahu drew on the experiences of international forces such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights, and European Union Border Assistance Mission at the crossings in Gaza – all forces that failed in their mandates – to stress that only Israeli control would be acceptable.

Netanyahu made clear to Bishop that for Israel’s safety, a Palestinian state must recognize Israel as the national home of the Jewish people and be demilitarized, with Israel retaining ultimate security control.

Sources in the prime minister’s entourage dismissed speculation that there was any contact during Netanyahu’s visit between his delegation and that of Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who arrived in Australia on Saturday for his first visit as president.

Indonesia, which has the world’s largest Muslim population, does not have diplomatic ties with Israel, though over the years there has been contact at the highest diplomatic levels. Delegations of Indonesian journalists are also periodically invited to the country.

In addition, Israeli businesses reportedly trade with Indonesia informally through both Australia and Singapore.

Nevertheless, on his recent flight from Singapore to Sydney, Netanyahu’s plane was forced to take a circuitous route that lengthened his trip by some three hours – to about 11 hours instead of 8 – because Indonesia would not let his El Al plane fly through its airspace.