FESTIVAL OF HATE CAN'T GO ON

LEADING AUSSIES DEMAND COUNCIL STOP 'DANGEROUS' INTIFADA EVENT

SUZAN GIULIANI AND GEORGIA PALGAN

Prominent Australians have called on federal and state governments to urgently step in and stop a forum at a council-owned building advocating for the right to use the slogan "globalise the intifada", which is considered by many in the Jewish community as a call for "violence".

Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, ex-treasurer Josh Frydenberg, Olympic legend Dawn Fraser and Indigenous Olympic gold medallist Nova Peris have demanded the City of Sydney cancel the forum.

City of Sydney councillors on Tuesday night refused to debate a motion raising safety concerns from the Jewish community about the 'Why It's Right to Say: Globalise the Intifada' forum at the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre on May 5.

Mr Frydenberg said the 'globalise the intifada' slogan was "reckless", "dangerous" and "unAustralian".

"This event planned to be held in a City of Sydney Council owned building must not go ahead and governments federal, state and local must take action and intervene," Mr Frydenberg told The Daily Telegraph.

"Globalise the Intifada is an explicit call for violence and it's unthinkable that people in positions of authority who have a profound responsibility to maintain the safety of their citizens could simply standby, shrug their shoulders and let such a festival of hate go ahead."

Mr Frydenberg said the Bondi massacre - Australia's worst terrorist incident - did not happen in a vacuum.

"It followed more than two years of escalating attacks in word and deed on Australia's Jewish community," he said.

"It was a tragic wake up call for our country and for our leaders who had ignored the warnings.

“If this planned event saying it’s okay to chant Globalise the Intifada goes ahead it will send a chilling message that nothing has been learnt and little has changed. Australia and Australians will be less safe as a result.”

While pro-Palestinian activists say the word intifada merely means an “uprising”, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) has said “intifada has a specific political meaning in the Arab-Israeli conflict, referring to violent campaigns of terrorism targeting civilians”.

Four-time Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer Fraser joined calls for the state and federal government to step-in to stop the forum from going ahead.

“There’s so much hatred for the Jewish community … it should be stopped, and the government is not doing enough on it,” she said.

“I don’t think the government is doing enough to stop the hatred in this beautiful country of ours … it’s a beautiful country, but we should be very careful of who we let in.”

Mr Abbott said: “If the NSW government can arrest people for booing a Welcome to Country they sure should outlaw calls for global violence against Jews.”

Peris, Australia’s first Indigenous Olympic gold medallist and ex-Labor senator, said: “I’m disgusted that a public facility under the control of the City of Sydney Council would allow a forum promoting the phrase ‘globalise the intifada’.”

“It is completely inappropriate and deeply damaging to the social cohesion our country is trying to restore,” she said.

NSW Opposition Leader Kellie Sloane has written to Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore demanding the forum be “immediately cancelled.”

Ms Sloane has received more than 900 complaints from NSW residents about the event.

“The NSW Parliament’s Committee on Law and Safety has found that the slogan, ‘globalise the intifada’ may be perceived to incite violence against Jewish people, and the NSW Government has indicated it will legislate to ban the chanting of the phrase,” the letter said.

“It is therefore deeply concerning that the City of Sydney is permitting a council-owned facility to be used for a forum on why it is right to say, ‘globalise the intifada’.

“Chris Minns has not shown leadership on this issue. He should speak directly to Clover Moore and call on her to cancel this event.”

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies president David Ossip said: “The fact that a motion raising concerns about the use of council facilities for this dangerous and divisive event could not even be seconded speaks volumes.”

“The hosting of an event which calls for violence against Jewish Australians by the City of Sydney Council is not a minor matter – it is a disgraceful and deliberate abdication of responsibility,” he said.

Jewish non-profit advocacy group StandWithUs Australia has also announced it was intending to “peacefully” protest outside the forum at East Sydney Community and Arts Centre next week.

A NSW Police spokesman said police were aware of next week’s forum and would monitor the situation accordingly.

Meanwhile, Sheina Gutnick, whose father Reuven Morrison was one of the 15 killed in the Bondi massacre, said she has not received any response from the council or Ms Moore to a letter she sent on April 20 outlining her concerns about the forum.

“This is something my community, my family, and I are living with every day. When language that is widely understood as a call for violence is given a public platform, it directly shapes how safe people feel, how communities function, and how individuals move through their daily lives,” she wrote in the letter.

Ms Gutnick has also written to federal MP for Wentworth Allegra Spender askinmgher to step in, but has not received a response.

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