

# Australian workers and youth condemn Israeli assault on Gaza

Our reporters

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Thousands of people attended a further series of rallies and marches last weekend in Sydney, Melbourne and Wollongong to condemn the death and destruction caused by the Israeli bombings in Gaza. Despite an unstable ceasefire having been announced days before, there were crowds of around 3,000 in both Sydney and Melbourne. Many participants noted that the attacks on the rights of the Palestinians were continuing, even though the bombing campaign had been suspended.

Speakers at the rallies included prominent Greens representatives, who centred their comments on appeals for the Australian government to cease cooperation with Israel.

This bankrupt perspective serves to cover-up Australia's role as a key US military ally, which is engaged in its own military build-up, in preparation for conflict with China. The Greens' position is directed against the development of an independent movement of the working class against war, instead serving to divert widespread opposition into impotent appeals to the very political forces responsible for the growth of militarism.

The WSWS spoke to people attending the rallies in Sydney and Melbourne.

In Sydney, **Abdul**, a 17-year-old shipping container unloader, said, "They are targeting the weak and innocent. For over twenty years it hasn't been an equal fight. But because there is a response from the Palestinians, Israel and its allies are saying it's an equal fight, but it's not on the same level. It's been the Israeli military and police against the people."

**Sue**, who works in customer service, stated, "Israel and the world have a lot to answer for. We are human beings and deserve to live in peace, like any other person in the world. It is time to give us equal rights. My grandparents were children when they were forced from their homes in 1948. Why can't I come home? I am a refugee."

When asked what she thought of widespread opposition

among Jewish people to the Israeli onslaught, she said, "I applaud them and I say thank you for standing up for what is right and not being blinded by a Zionist government. The Jewish people know what is going on, that is why so many oppose it."

**A 17-year-old high school student** who wished to remain anonymous, asked, "What was the UN created for? They were supposed to be there to stop the outbreak of major wars. It is a group of the whole world, they come together and have meetings, yet still this happens. And what are they doing? Sitting back in their chairs having coffee and cigars relaxing. It's all corruption."

"The governments don't intervene to prevent the bombings for economic reasons. There are big deals happening, like the Saudi king who has close ties with Israel, and the US, which is giving it massive military aid. Nearly half the world is at war so it probably will end up spreading to the whole world till there's only 1 percent of the world left not in conflict. In this world the fathers bury their sons, instead of a good world where the sons bury their fathers. A business owner is going to drink up all the wealth and only give a droplet of water to the workers, unless the workers rise up and fight for their rights."

**Zeinab**, a retail worker, declared: "Nobody wants to live in war, everybody just wants to live in peace. We can co-exist. We just want rights, like everyone, to have electricity all day, to have clean water. We want the blockade to be lifted. I think non-Zionist Jewish people do really care about us. But there are some people that don't care, that want to kill us."

Asked about the danger of a broader war, Zeinab said "That's a problem, especially in the south of Lebanon. I think it was in 2006 that Israel came in and attacked Lebanon for no reason whatsoever. That's what we're scared of. We don't want war. We don't want that to happen."

**Ausama**, a 23-year-old martial arts fighter, also

commented on the broad opposition to the attacks on Gaza. “You see that there are many Israelis and Jews are also supporting the Palestinian movement, which tells you that this is not just an Islamic movement,” he said. “If the majority of the world is against this, with everybody going out and protesting, even in oppressed countries like Iraq and Kuwait, why aren’t governments doing anything? We want to know. What is the reason?”

**Joel**, who works in education, said: “A lot of the war, conflict and violence that we see is the big world countries fighting over resources, money and oil. And it all ultimately costs the lives and the blood of the working people of the world. I don’t know how we can get there but, we need international solidarity between the working class. We need to somehow build socialism.

“The main obstacle has been that the ruling class has been able to sow divisions within the working class, based on things like race, gender and religion, and basically use divide and conquer tactics on the working class. You can look at someone who is worse off than you, and think they are the problem in your life, as opposed to Jeff Bezos and Gina Reinhardt who are literally making billions and billions off the back of the resources of the earth, and exploit their workers.

“It’s very hard to break that kind of narrative when the ruling class controls the media. The media are part of that ruling-class establishment as well, they are looking after their own interests keeping us divided and keeping them on the top.”

Those attending the rally in Melbourne voiced similar sentiments. **Hannah** said, “This is the first demonstration I have attended. People can’t find out about what is going on. The Israeli military targeted the Associated Press and Al Jazeera, blowing up the building they were working from. They are trying to have less people to film and know about what is going on. People can see it if it’s filmed and feel more connected to it.

“The US is saying that Israel is defending itself but it is the Israeli government that has been causing antagonisms until there is a response, which they then use as a pretext for an attack. They want to get a reaction.”

**Emily**, who is studying criminology, said “I’m here to support Palestine. It’s an issue that is often swept under the rug, especially given Australia’s history of colonial dispossession. The treatment of people under law is bad. If you are against Israel it can be called terrorism, it’s a very broad definition. People from Palestinian are imprisoned for this.

“The situation on the ground is that there is no access to basic resources. It’s quite unsafe and there is inequality between the two groups. It’s pretty horrible the response from Netanyahu. The military response is like an extreme-right dictatorship. The US says to Israel, ‘Don’t go too far,’ but it has been armed by the US which props it up.”

**Jennifer** commented: “Given they already started attacking the Palestinians in the mosque during the prayers after the ceasefire, this shows that they don’t keep to their word. I have a friend in Nablus and another in Ramallah and they’re saying the conditions are quite bad with regard to the early curfews and the military walking around.”

She had volunteered in 2013 in Nablus. “Palestinians don’t have access to water which affects their productivity with olives and figs which are their main resources there. People in the Gaza Strip aren’t allowed to go several metres into the ocean to do their fishing so the small area they have is overfished.”

Regarding Biden’s response, Jennifer said, “I’m quite saddened but not surprised. I’m American. I’m not surprised that he’s still supporting Israel. The US has so much power over Israel.”

**Evan**, a graphic designer, said “It’s a complete atrocity in every way shape and form. You can’t stand by idly. Even with the ceasefire the Palestinian people are still living under occupation. It doesn’t resolve anything. This has been happening for 50 years or more.

“Biden was branded as a ‘not-Trump’ candidate, but he really is not much different. The US is in the Middle East for oil and control. That’s what the Iraq wars were about. It goes back such a long time.”

Asked about the Afghanistan war crimes carried out by the Australian military, Evan said, “Australia thinks it can go and do whatever it wants in the world based on the fact that it’s an ally of the US. I’m feeling very disenfranchised with politics.”



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