

New Zealand political establishment backs Israel's genocidal crackdown in Gaza

John Braddock
11 October 2023

New Zealand's political establishment and corporate media have wasted no time in joining the other imperialist powers in supporting the bloody crackdown by Israel's extreme-right Zionist government against the Palestinian uprising launched over the weekend.

Labour Party Prime Minister Chris Hipkins labelled the popular revolt by the Palestinian masses against decades of Israeli occupation "terror attacks" which New Zealand "condemns unequivocally."

"New Zealand has designated the military wing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation, and we recognise Israel's right to defend itself," Hipkins said in a statement.

Hipkins's full-throated support for the criminal government of Benjamin Netanyahu while demonising the oppressed Palestinians followed virtually identical comments by the main opposition National Party leader Christopher Luxon who said "there is no justification" for the actions of the Palestinians.

The unanimity between the major capitalist parties in backing Israeli repression exposes the sham of the confected "differences" presented in the campaign ahead of Saturday's election.

Labour has, according to Hipkins, "paused" a suggestion that it would invite the Canberra-based Palestinian ambassador to present his credentials to New Zealand, thereby joining other UN members recognising Palestine. Deputy Prime Minister Grant Robertson declared there was "no state" to recognise.

Any deviation from full-throated vilification of the Palestinians is being quickly quashed.

Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta initially posted a guarded statement on X/Twitter which called for an "immediate cessation of violence." After an immediate media backlash over her failure to explicitly blame

Hamas, she released a re-worded statement condemning the "terrorist attacks led by Hamas on Israel."

The reaction of the political and media establishment is a warning. A hysterical pro-war climate is being whipped up. Media barrages are directed against even the mildest comments which dare to take issue with any violence on the part of Israel. This shows that any opposition in the New Zealand working class to imperialist machinations in the Middle East or anywhere else will be shouted down by the corporate media and not tolerated by the political establishment.

Minor parties contesting the election have been no less vocal in their baying for Palestinian blood. The far-right ACT leader David Seymour said Mahuta's initial expression of mere "concern" meant "we can't rely on her." He declared: "ACT stands with the people of Israel and strongly supports Israel's right to defend itself."

Winston Peters, leader of the extreme-right NZ First, and foreign minister in the 2017-2020 Labour-led coalition, criticised the Labour government for being "late getting off the mark." Peters has for many years played an odious role promoting poisonous anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim chauvinism which has been taken up by successive governments.

Peters joined an international chorus of capitalist politicians who claim the Hamas attacks were unprovoked "premeditated attacks on innocent people."

The media slander on the oppressed population of Gaza as "terrorists" is a repugnant political lie. Masses of people around the world sympathise with the uprising by the Palestinians who have been subjected to decades of violence by the Zionist regime in Israel, armed by the major NATO powers, and its fascistic "settlers."

Playing the moralising “pacifist” card, the Green Party, which is part of the government, issued a formal statement declaring: “Violence against civilians, whether committed by Hamas or the Israeli Defence Force is utterly unacceptable.”

Green MP Golriz Ghahraman posted on X/Twitter; “Nothing justifies targeting or harming civilians,” and “Israeli civilians, like young people at a music fest, deserved safety. Hamas' actions were despicable [sic] crimes. There are 1 million children living in Gaza. They deserve safety from IDF bombs.”

A minor party leaders’ debate on Tuesday saw the far-right ACT and NZ First clash with Green Party co-leader Marama Davidson.

Asked if Hamas should be declared a terrorist entity, Davidson said the same test should be applied to the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). She said the terrorist designation should be applied “equally to all terrorist acts,” which both Peters and Seymour dismissed. In an inflammatory tirade, Peters accused the Greens of making “anti-semitic” statements.

Te Pahi Māori (Māori Party) which postures as an indigenous, anti-colonialist party, has not issued any formal statement condemning Israel. Co-leader Debbie Ngarewa-Packer told a TVNZ interview on Tuesday: “We condemn violence on all civilians,” adding only there is “a bigger picture about this conflict which involves colonialism and genocide of Palestinian people... which western sources don’t talk about.”

The “pacifism” of the Greens and Te Pahi Māori seeks to equate the violence of the Israeli occupation with the revolt of the Palestinian masses against decades of oppression.

As the International Committee of the Fourth International stated: “As has always been the case throughout history, every act of resistance from the masses evokes frenzied outrage from the ruling elites.... It is understood that what is taking place is a mass uprising against a brutal occupation, and that by ‘terrorism’ the ruling class means any manifestation of opposition to its interests and policies.”

The response of New Zealand’s fake “left,” upper-middle-class milieu is one of utter cowardice and bowing to the imperialist indictments of Palestinian “terrorism.”

The “liberal” *Daily Blog* editor Martyn Bradbury denounced “the unprecedented violence Hamas has just

launched against Israel” and declared “butchery” by Hamas “an atrocity beyond justification.”

Only after condemning the Palestinian uprising, does Bradbury insert a mild denunciation of Israeli “provocations.” John Minto, convenor of the Palestine Solidarity Network, also wrote on the *Daily Blog* that Hipkins was “correct” to condemn Hamas killing Israeli civilians.

As the WSWWS has noted, there is tragedy bound up with the deaths of civilians who were caught in the breakout by desperate Palestinian militants. But the blame must be sheeted home where it belongs—to the criminal Israeli apartheid regime and its US imperialist backers.

New Zealand’s political establishment’s bellicose recriminations against Palestine and full-throated support for Israeli occupation is of a piece with the response of imperialist governments around the world. Political leaders in the US, Germany, Australia, the UK and elsewhere have unanimously come out in support of Israel, which acts as the chief proxy of US imperialism in the Middle East.

Behind the hysterical and hypocritical denunciations is the fundamental class attitude of the oppressors to any resistance by the oppressed, whether it is in Gaza or anywhere. The uprising of the oppressed masses in Palestine is the sharpest expression of a growing upsurge of the international working class, including in New Zealand itself, as struggles erupt against war, poverty and authoritarianism.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact