

Protests against Israeli genocide grow larger in Australia

Our reporters

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Protests continue to grow in Australia against the US- and Australian government-backed Israeli genocidal war against Gaza, with the largest turnout over the weekend since the onslaught began a month ago.

Tens of thousands of workers and youth took to the streets in all the main cities. In Melbourne more than 30,000 attended. In Sydney over 15,000 marched. Thousands joined in Adelaide and Perth. In Newcastle, two hours north of Sydney, more than a 1,000 took part in a march on Saturday, the first major rally in the regional city since the assault began.

In Brisbane, over 7,000 people joined the largest demonstration yet in the city. After a rally, they marched across the Brisbane River to protest outside the offices of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) against its pro-Israeli bias. In response, the ABC blacked out the protest.

Over the past four weeks, the entire corporate and government media, including the ABC and former Fairfax press, has buried reports of the protests, while promoting spurious claims of potential violence and hate speech. Now the media has dropped virtually all reportage of the rallies.

In Darwin, the Northern Territory capital, at least one protester was arrested on Friday night after attempting to enter a \$5,000-a-head Labor Party fundraising event featuring Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Footage emerged of protesters being physically restrained by security, while demanding “ceasefire now.”

At the Melbourne rally, the WSWs spoke to **Walid**, a general practitioner doctor. “I’m here to show my support for Gaza, for Palestine,” he said. “It is basically the systematic ethnic cleansing by Israel for the last 75 years. This is just the latest chapter.

“These countries, America and Australia, are

protecting their own interests, but you can see here today that the people are not in agreement with what the governments are doing. It is plain to see what is going on, especially with the development of social media, people can see the truth.

“People’s voices can be heard from all over the world. It takes away from the bias of the Western media. The people of every country are with the Palestinians. I think it is just a basic human instinct to not want to see kids and innocent people getting slaughtered; it’s the governments that are not.”

Commenting on the interests behind the imperialist powers’ support for Israel, Walid said: “I think Israel represents the West’s interests in the region, in the Middle East, and it’s part of a greater plan to preserve the interests of those countries. The USA is controlled by the Israeli lobby, and it doesn’t matter who sits in the Oval Office—Republican or Democrat—they all agree on supporting Israel. But I think the American public is starting to turn against this, because their billions in tax money is going towards killing innocent people.”

Sandy said: “I’ve lost all faith in the Labor Party, and I will never vote for them again. I’ve been voting Labor for about 11 years now, but never again. I thought the government would have called for the war to be stopped by now, ask for a ceasefire or use other methods.

“Israel wants the land; they’ve always wanted the land. But as long as Palestinians keep fighting, we’ll be their voices on the other side of the world. Today, if you have a look at Washington D.C., it is the biggest protest to date in the US. In France they’re trying to ban the protests. But our voices will be heard. We will not stop until everybody gets basic human rights.”

Bridey, a 28-year-old law graduate, said: “I think that Israel is committing crimes against humanity and

international war crimes. They have no regard for the lives of the Palestinian people and it's a genocide. I would like to see the Australian government support a ceasefire. It's really disappointing that they haven't come out and said that. We shouldn't be supplying arms. I know the US does, but we are complicit if Australia does also. We are complicit in these war crimes."

In Sydney, **Sahar**, who owns a food manufacturing business, said: "Israel is doing what it is doing because it feels that there is permission to commit crimes against humanity. The second thing is that Israel felt very embarrassed. They lost face through what happened on October 7. They want revenge because they must show the world that they are still a strong military entity on one hand, but also Netanyahu and his government must save face with their own people.

"We can't forget that Israeli society was on the verge of collapse because of their own political crisis. When I think about who is benefitting the most from this, the only name that comes to mind is Netanyahu and the worse it gets, the better it is for him. There is a lot of factors to encourage this Israeli government to be as vicious as they can, with the complete backing of the governments of the western world."

Sahar continued: "The silence of the Arab world doesn't help at all. They are making it worse. I'm talking about those who have influence like Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Egypt. Those countries are shutting up and not doing much about it. They simply say a few things to save face.

"There are multiple levels to this. We are told that we live in a democracy. But is it truly a democracy when the media is controlled by the corporations, and the corporations are basically brainwashing all of us to a certain way of acting?"

Sahar added: "It is incumbent on all of us to question and to educate everyone we can that whatever is being promised in the future is a horrible scene. This genocide is an exercise that tells you that one entity can practice such an injustice on another. There is a great movement happening, we can't deny that, but at the same time the countries are continuing to support genocide."

In Newcastle, **Mohamed** explained: "We're here to support Palestinians and to stop the Israeli attack by calling for a ceasefire and providing all support for the

people in Gaza. This is a long-time occupation, 75 years. Israel is committing genocide. They are killing kids, killing elderly people. We are expressing our objection to this.

"It is very confusing to me that all the governments are following Israel, against what the people in their own countries are saying. In Ukraine, governments have supported that country against Russia, but when it comes to Palestine, they support Israel. It's a double standard. I believe the existence of Israel is one hand of US control in the region of the Middle East. I suppose the US is seeing Ukraine in the same way.

"Around the world, everyone is screaming out and calling for a ceasefire, but Israel is just continuing with this destruction. It doesn't matter what the UN has said or what people protesting are saying, they just don't care.

"I heard on the news about the Belgian workers who are going to stop transporting weapons to Israel. This is a very, very good movement from them. I hope that places like England, Germany, France also do this, and here too. There needs to be a collective action. It can't be one-sided. This kind of movement could do something. It would be very powerful and could make a great change.

"Workers are the most powerful section of the country. If we could get all the workers to stop sending weapons, that would have a significant impact."



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