

Largest Australian protests against Gaza genocide yet, blacked out by media

Our reporters

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More than 100,000 people joined protests across Australia on Sunday, opposing Israel's genocidal onslaught against Gaza, in the largest rallies since the bombardment began. The Sydney protest, with over 60,000 participants, was twice as large as some of the previous mobilisations in that city. At least 50,000 turned out in Melbourne, with thousands in the other capital cities.

That is part of an international trend, with the demonstrations globally continuing to swell, despite government threats and media slanders. As was the case around the world, protesters in Australia expressed horror at Israel's relentless targeting of hospitals, civilian infrastructure and children. There is intense anger and a degree of shock at the federal Labor government's full-throated support for some of the worst war crimes since the Holocaust.

The press is responding to the groundswell by deepening its complicity in the genocide. The Murdoch-owned Australian ludicrously claimed that the protests had drawn on "Hitler and the Nazis' legacies." The evidence provided for this gratuitous slander was that some placards had compared the war crimes of Israel to those of the Nazis!

The massive protest in its city apparently threw the *Sydney Morning Herald* into a crisis. The publication did not report for several hours on the main event of the day in Sydney. It eventually posted an article, leading with complaints from the New South Wales Labor government about the cost of policing the weekly pro-Palestinian protests. The article featured a small pro-Israel rally held in Sydney on the same day, then stating that "thousands more" had attended the demonstration in defence of Gaza.

In Sydney and Melbourne hand-made banners included: "Australia is complicit in genocide," "Pine

Gap spies for Palestine genocide," and "Over 80,000 Australians marched for Palestine last week and it didn't even make it to the news."

With the media and the governments exposed as accomplices of an historic assault on a defenceless population, the critical issue is the development of a revolutionary socialist movement of the working class. That is the perspective that Socialist Equality Party campaigners advanced at the protests. Below are the comments of some attendees.

In Melbourne, **Dr. Jasmin** spoke of the latest reports on the Israeli military's assault on the healthcare system in Gaza: "We know that first, it's a tragedy, what's happening. It's not the first time that we've heard there's a scarcity of supplies and electricity. Now it's reached a point where crucial machines in hospitals have stopped working. Incubators, ventilators have shut down. I know at least one person in ICU died because their ventilator turned off. I know that at least two babies have died because their incubators stopped working. This destiny awaits something between 37 and 40 other neonates. How can this happen? It baffles me.

"We live and work in a privileged, well-resourced country. To watch this tragedy unfold from afar is agonising. Why couldn't Australia and the rest of the world donate resources? These deaths were preventable and what hurts us the most is we saw it coming. We advocated for intervention, for condemnation, and little to nothing has happened. This is over four weeks after it all started and over three weeks since we started lobbying as health care workers. The sanctity of human life is being blatantly desecrated."

Dr. Jasmin continued: "It's so blatantly obvious and undeniable. The videos suffice as evidence—missiles fall on sacred healthcare grounds, tanks surround Al

Shifa hospital. No excuse will ever justify the killing of innocent civilians. This topic makes me so upset—we had our healthcare rally here only three weeks ago, after the bombing of just one hospital [Al Ahli], and since then, something like five other hospitals have been bombed. Only innocent lives have been taken. It's not achieving the so-called goal of eliminating Hamas, that Israel claims. When will this stop?

“Demonstrating is the least we can do. As healthcare workers we made an oath to do no harm and to maintain justice, and this is the bare minimum that we can do to raise our voices in support of that. What is happening in Gaza is that lives which our colleagues are trying to save—lives that we made an oath to heal—are being taken, stolen, and it's beyond unfair. It's criminal... The plight of the Palestinian people extends beyond their immediate suffering; it reverberates beyond and is felt by everyone around the world. We all need a ceasefire. We all need peace.”

Also in Melbourne, **Hany**, an engineer, said: “The US are trying to establish their own client state in the Middle East, but the real reason for its support for Israel is about the money. That's it, it's not just about Israel. Everywhere, any genocide, where they're killing innocent people, search where the money is. It's a simple answer—oil, resources, in the end it's all money.”

Responding to a discussion on the WSWs call for a global movement of the working class in defence of the Palestinian people, he replied: “I totally agree, I've seen the movement in Port Botany in Sydney trying to stop cargo ships from Israel, and shipping arms and weapons to Israel. I totally agree with that—we shouldn't be part of this genocide. We should all be united, the idea of having a work strike is great, it's all about uniting everyone to have the same voice, and I think this could work. Because what's happening now is just serving a small minority of individuals, it's all about their money and their wealth, and they're taking from our taxes to give arms to Israel.”

Molly, a 28-year-old charity worker, was attending her first demonstration against Israel's attack on Gaza. She told the WSWs: “I'm here to stand up for Palestine. I feel like I initially didn't have a lot of information and wasn't very clued up, but I feel over the past week I've become quite clear, so I needed to come today. Depending on your social media

algorithm, people can just be swayed either way so easily by the media. I think that before now I've been exposed to a lot of the horror-story stuff about Hamas, and I wasn't quite sure where I stood. But I think recently there has been a lot more pro-Palestine media out there, revealing what is happening in Gaza, which has been important.”

On the global anti-war movement, she commented: “It's amazing, it just shows the power of humanity, what humans can do if we come together and rally together. I guess there is kind of a silver lining in the situation, if you could even say that—it shows that we can do more, and that there is power in it.”

In Sydney, **Jocelyn**, a young student, explained she was attending her first rally in support of the Palestinians. “I'm here to protest the genocide of the Palestinians by the Israelis. Not only that, we are opposing the Australian government's support of Israel.

“Before, I was absent from social media, and so I was ignorant of what was going on. But now that I've educated myself, I had to be here. Newborn babies, not even able to see the world yet, have died in incubators because of the power outages after Israel bombed hospitals in Gaza.”

Like numbers of other attendees, Jocelyn had written her name on her arm. This, she explained, was a show of solidarity with those in Gaza, where children are having their name written on their arm for identification in case they are murdered.

“History repeats itself, but it doesn't have to,” Jocelyn said. “We have to take a stand against this and end the mass murder.”

Noura, a working-class mother, gave a video interview:



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