

Australia Post workers: Oppose genocide in Gaza! Heed the call of Palestinian workers to shut down Israel's war machine!

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Australia)
17 November 2023

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) urges all Australia Post workers to take up the call by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions for solidarity action to stop Israel's genocide in Gaza.

We endorse the statements of our sister organisations, the UK and US Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committees, which have not only called for action to halt the supply of war materiel to the Netanyahu regime in Israel, but also “a refusal by postal workers to deliver mail to government and civil service departments and companies involved in the arms trade.”

The PWRFC condemns the leadership of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), which has remained silent throughout the onslaught against Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Israel has already killed at least 12,000 Gazans since October 7, including more than 4,000 children. Hospitals, schools, refugee camps and critical infrastructure have been targeted and repeatedly attacked, with two-thirds of hospitals in Gaza no longer able to function at all and food and clean water in desperately short supply.

In the face of this escalating carnage, the CWU's silence is a tacit endorsement of Israel's war crimes and the complicity of the Australian political establishment. Like all the unions, the CWU bureaucracy is completely aligned with the pro-war Labor government of Anthony Albanese.

In lockstep with the Biden administration and imperialist governments worldwide, Labor is supporting and funding the Zionist regime's relentless attacks on hospitals and other vital civilian

infrastructure under the phoney pretext of “self-defence.”

As part of the US alliance, Australia is directly implicated in the massacre, with the Pine Gap spy base in Alice Springs surveilling Gaza and providing intelligence to the Israel Defence Forces for the purpose of military planning and targeting.

US support for the Israeli genocide and removal of the Palestinians from Gaza is bound up with long-held plans for war against Iran. Along with the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and escalating moves towards war against China, what is being prepared is a global conflict aimed at shoring up the political and economic hegemony of US imperialism.

The Albanese government—with bipartisan support—is fully committed to this perspective. In preparation for Australia to play a leading role in the Indo-Pacific, military expenditure has been ratcheted up repeatedly, including with the allocation of \$368 billion for nuclear-powered submarines.

There is no brick wall between the onslaught on the Palestinian people, the broader drive to World War III, and the attacks on the living standards, wages and conditions of workers at home. Already, the working class is being made to foot the war bill, through harsh cuts to real wages and social spending.

This is being overseen and enforced by the union bureaucracy, just as it has supported the pro-business policies of Labor and the Coalition over decades, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of thousands of jobs and the creation of massive social inequality.

At Australia Post, the CWU is now spearheading a restructuring operation in line with the Labor government's cost-cutting Australia Post

Modernisation Plan. As part of the Post 26 initiative, hundreds of jobs have already been cut, and retail post office locations have been shut down.

In full cooperation with management, the union is playing the leading role in implementing a new delivery model for postal workers, lengthening rounds, cutting letter frequency and loading posties up with more and more parcels in order to boost company profits.

Conscious that the disastrous and hated Alternative Delivery Model is fresh in the memory of all Australia Post delivery workers, and with its credibility damaged by its own role in enforcing it, the CWU is working to protect management from any opposition to the latest restructure.

In a similar vein, the CWU, along with all the other unions, is determined to prevent the outbreak of strikes or other industrial action against the assault on Gaza and the US-led drive to global war.

This flies in the face of both the direct appeal of Palestinian trade unions and the growing support of working people in Australia and globally for action to stop the onslaught. Along with mass public demonstrations around the world, workers in Spain and Belgium are refusing to participate in the transport of weapons to Israel, while protests in the US and in Melbourne have delayed the movements of Israeli ships.

These actions are an important start to what is required to stop Israel's genocide: a unified campaign of political and industrial action by workers in every country, directed against national governments that are all equally committed to war abroad and against the working class at home.

Such a fight is impossible within the stranglehold of the trade unions. In Australia, this is most starkly expressed by the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), which publicly claims to support the Palestinian cause but is in fact ensuring that union members continue to service Israeli ships without disruption.

The MUA leadership is hiding behind Australia's harsh anti-strike laws, which outlaw industrial action, except over immediate safety or basic wages and conditions, and then only during tightly regulated enterprise bargaining periods. The same pretext has been used time and time again by all the unions, including the CWU, as a means of isolating striking

workers, shutting down disputes and imposing sell-out enterprise agreements.

In the face of genocide and the increasing threat of a nuclear third world war, such excuses cannot be tolerated. The anti-strike laws and the industrial courts that enforce them must be challenged. But the unions will do no such thing. Along with Labor, they were the architects of this anti-democratic legislation and defend it to the hilt.

Australia Post workers who are repulsed by Israel's barbaric assault and the complicity of the Labor government cannot wait any longer for the CWU, or any other union, to act. Organisations that refuse to oppose the mass murder of innocent civilians have no right to claim that they represent the interests of working people.

This means taking matters into our own hands. A global movement to stop Israel's genocide must be combined with a rank-and-file rebellion against the pro-corporate and pro-government trade union bureaucracy.

New organisations, rank-and-file committees, run by workers themselves, must be established in all workplaces, including in every Australia Post depot and throughout the transport and logistics sector. Through a network of such committees, the working class, which creates all of the world's wealth, and without whom nothing can move, can start to build a global counter-offensive against genocide, oppression and war.

If you support this, we urge you to join the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee and help fight for it. To join the committee, or for more information, email us, or fill out the form below.



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