

Australian protesters speak out: Gaza genocide “is about protecting US imperialist interests in the Middle East”

Our reporters
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For the seventh consecutive week, mass protests were held across Australia in opposition to the Gaza genocide. Over 30,000 attended in Melbourne, some 10,000 or more in Sydney and thousands of others in Perth and Brisbane.

The anger at the Labor government’s full-throated support for Israel is only growing. Participants also rejected with contempt suggestions that the phony “humanitarian pause” of recent days marked any deviation from Israel’s genocidal campaign. Many pointedly described it as an opportunity to reload and an attempt to dissipate popular hostility.

The demonstrations were again minimised, downplayed or simply ignored by the mainstream media. The *Sydney Morning Herald* did not mention the Sunday rally in its Monday edition. That meant the only reference to the protest in a major print newspaper was an appalling article in the *Daily Telegraph*, which stated that “more than 200 people marched through Sydney’s CBD.” The intrepid reporters must not have seen the thousands of other people who were also marching.

In Sydney, **Anna** said: “We are here trying to inconvenience the Australian government as much as possible so that they feel and know that there is no way that they can continue to support Israel financially and militarily. We also want to let them know we will not accept this kind of treatment.

“A government that treats people overseas that look different to us this way will also treat the most vulnerable people in Australia the very same way. Even though we are not being impacted personally right now this reflects the way that the government will treat us if

we let them. Instead of focussing on issues like rents and the cost of living, they are supporting Israel’s war. Racism is used to divide the workers.”

Her cousin **Tinial** added: “If they divide us, they can conquer us. We need to show them [the government] that they work for us and if they don’t do what we want then they are out.”

Areebah, a university student, said: “I’m here to protest the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the genocide they are carrying out in Gaza and the increased levels of settler and colonial violence elsewhere, including the attacks on Lebanon and Syria.

“It is limiting to look at it as a mere Israel/Gaza conflict because really, it is all about protecting American interests in the area, as Joe Biden said himself. Everyone should look at it on a bigger picture scale because at the end of the day it is about US imperialism in the Middle East protecting their economic and military interests in the area.

“I think developments are connected, like the genocide in Congo and Sudan. They are all funded by the same people, so it is really a global issue that we all need to mobilise against.”

Areebah’s mother, **Shanchita**, added: “This time is a little different because the people are not just being fed information by the media like we used to be in the past. People can see exactly what is happening in real time and so the whole media narrative is falling apart a little. The media is still trying as hard as it can, but people’s eyes have opened. My hope is that this will lead to something different.”

Areebah said, “The reason we have seen a very slight shift in the media is because it has become increasingly untenable for them to maintain their narrative when

there is such a public outcry against it. It is becoming impossible to ignore the fact that the general population completely opposes what is going on.

“In the beginning every conversation was centred around Hamas and so-called terrorism, but now they are starting to talk about what the Israeli occupation is doing. On the ABC this morning they were talking about settler violence on the West Bank, and I was like ‘finally you’re talking about this after weeks and weeks.’

“The reason the ABC changed their narrative was because one afternoon about 200 journalists came forward in a meeting and said they were very unhappy with the way the ABC cover the war and then that night there was a slight shift in the narrative.”

In Melbourne the WSWS spoke with **Khadija**, who explained, “I’m from a different ethnicity, but yesterday, today and tomorrow I am Palestinian. We’ve been watching this genocide unfold. I think you need to be here to support the people.

“In Gaza it is horrendous, so many international humanitarian laws are being breached and the fact that Israel is not being held accountable for that is shocking. When you compare Muslim countries, Third World countries that are being held accountable for international humanitarian laws, it’s just hypocrisy at its finest. This shouldn’t be happening at any level.”

On the role of the Labor Party and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, she said, “It’s shocking to see, especially Albanese who said he supported Palestine protests in the past. He’s now here making bold statements against Palestine. On Labor, I think it is a deeper issue, a history—we know that there is oil located in Gaza. It is all about money. Australia is known for its fossil fuels, of course they’re going to support a state that wants the fossil fuels from Gaza, it just makes sense.”

Asked about the truce, Khadiha responded: “Excuse my language, I think it is utterly bull. Do you really expect a state that is committing genocide to hold its promises? We’re only three or four hours into this pause, and there were Israeli snipers shooting at journalists. You can see it’s all fake, it’s for the media.”

She also spoke of the global movement in defence of the Palestinians, including school student strikes held in the previous week across multiple Australian cities.

“The younger generation is finally waking up from this media control. Our parents, our grandparents—they have been under control. Seeing children fighting for a cause, children fighting for children, their right to live, I think it is amazing. I think more of us need to do that.

“Children that went to the strike rally, they’re heroes, to me they’re better than any other person I’ve ever seen. You know when you go to school you’re held up by these rules and regulations, and you can get suspended, expelled even for breaking them. These kids need to be protected from the media, and as adults it is our duty to protect them now.”



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