

Australian protests against Gaza genocide: Governments are not listening to us

Our reporters

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Thousands again gathered across Australia on Sunday, as masses of people continue to register their opposition to Israel's genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza.

This weekend's protests coincided with the recent announcement that Foreign Minister Penny Wong will travel to Israel next month, as a symbol of the Labor government's full support for the criminal onslaught. A Zionist leader said she would receive the "red carpet treatment."

Several unions, including the Victorian Trades Hall, trumpeted their endorsements of Sunday's rallies. That it took them more than two months to endorse mass rallies against an unfolding genocide speaks volumes. But even still, the unions appear to have made no attempt to mobilise anybody, with the protests smaller than in some previous weeks.

The unions are completely aligned with the Labor government, as it greenlights the mass murder. In practice they have rejected an appeal from the Palestinian trade unions for action to halt the genocide. That is exemplified on the docks, where the Maritime Union of Australia enforces industrial peace and the unfettered loading and unloading of ships from the Zim line, which in October dedicated its entire fleet to the destruction of Gaza.

Socialist Equality Party campaigners discussed the role of Labor and the unions with protesters, finding growing anger and opposition towards both. They explained that the genocide was part of a broader eruption of imperialist militarism, posing the need for a unified movement of the international working class directed against the profit system itself.

Smaller events continue to be held aside from the regular weekend protests. That included a Friday evening vigil of health workers in the centre of Sydney.

At that event, **Omar**, a resident medical officer at a Sydney hospital, told the WSW: "I've come here today to show my support for the health care workers and Palestinians and all the innocent lives in Palestine being brutally taken by the Israeli occupying forces."

Asked why governments allow the mass murder

continuing, he stated: "I think it is multi-factorial. One key reason it is still persisting is the lack of accountability international governments are placing on Israel. There is all this talk about humanitarian pauses and temporary ceasefires, but no Western government is taking effective action.

"They are not implementing sanctions, they are not doing enough to show their support for the Palestinian people being massacred in Gaza. Unfortunately, despite weeks of protest and tens of thousands of people showing up and voicing their disdain for the silence of not only the Australian government but governments all over the world, our politicians simply aren't listening to us and aren't doing enough to reflect our beliefs and our voices and doing what they have been elected to do.

"The United States has used its veto powers [in the United Nations] for Israel more than any nation in the world. It constantly vetoes any security council resolutions which criticise the Israeli occupying forces or even resolutions which are introduced to provide support for the Palestinian people. It's horrible, the ultimate misuse of power. It's disgusting that it is being allowed to continue.

"The bi-partisan support for Israel that is going on in the US speaks for itself. The silence of the Australian government aids the illicit nature of what the US government is doing to not only support the apartheid Israeli occupation of Gaza but its lack of humanitarian aid for the Palestinian people.

"I say, 'Free Palestine! Now and forever! And ceasefire now!'"

Lilly, an art therapist, attended the Sunday demonstration in Sydney. She said: "I just got back from overseas. I have been going to the protests in Paris and this is the first one I've gone to in Sydney and I'm here to demand a ceasefire mostly.

"But my grandparents are Holocaust survivors and I'm here because I feel it is really important that anti-Zionism and antisemitism aren't conflated.

"That is one of the big reasons I am here. A lot of people I

know, even though they are pretty progressive, when it comes to Israel there is something that stops them from seeing this as clearly as an issue of justice. I feel that it is important to have a Jewish voice that is pro-Palestine because what Israel is doing is being done in the name of Jewish people. And that is why I really want to make sure that I'm coming.

"When I was overseas there were a few protests I couldn't go to because I would have been deported if I'd been arrested. So when I was able to go I felt it was more necessary to. And here I was thinking that you take it for granted, the right to protest until the government says that you can't.

"In France there is such a history of being able to protest and there is a joke that there will always be a protest on in France and the counter-protest is on the next day.

"A couple of years ago President Macron started to censor the protests which is really against the French populace's right to protest. I think it is really terrifying that they are trying to stop people from being able to gather because that is the basic right.

"I think it is definitely connected to capitalism. It is definitely about money and power. I was reading that the UN voted for a ceasefire and that every country said yes or abstained except the UK and the US and so it was still vetoed. So it is clearly a matter of the power that the US has."

Mohammed and **Aarya**, originally from Bangladesh, attended with their two children.

Mohammed said: "I brought my children here today because when I see the killing of the children in Gaza, I cannot help but think of my own children. Any parent knows that the murder of children is the worst crime. It needs to be stopped. I don't care what is said, it's wrong. I want them to be saved.

"This will be getting worse under the collective West, the powerful countries. As long as the Israeli government is getting support from the US and the Western world it will continue to happen.

"I don't think there'll be a ceasefire. It doesn't look likely at this moment. I don't know what kind of pressure people can put on them to stop, unfortunately. Something is wrong. It doesn't matter whether Albanese or the Liberals are in government, it doesn't change anything. It doesn't matter which government is in, they will not condemn this genocide. I don't know why. How can they talk about defending human rights all over the world and you don't condemn this kind of action?

Aarya added: "You don't need to be Muslim or religious to be here protesting. You just need to be human. Stop bombing the children. You just need to be human. Killing

children, killing women. How can one justify this?

"The mainstream media is controlled by the authorities. They're not spreading the truth, they're spreading propaganda."

Mohammed said: "So far I have read that 63 journalists have been killed in the bombing and it is one of the worst cases of killing reporters in a warzone in history in such a short span of time. Where is the outcry among the journalists?

"The school kids coming out on strike, they have more guts, more empathy than these politicians. It will have long term consequences. The West has soft power, they claim to be standing for human rights. When they try that again, accusing countries of violating human rights, people will straight away tell them, 'What did you do in Gaza?' So, their hypocrisy is exposed."

In Melbourne, **Christina**, who works as a gardener, told the WSWS: "I'm here in support of Palestine. I want the UN and Australia and the world to do something about what is happening, the genocide over there, and I'm here supporting the Palestinian people.

"It is pretty much just the US government on its own now, in terms of supporting Israel's actions. I think the world is seeing they're abusing the [UN security council] veto power to the point that they don't care about anybody. The UN was supposedly designed to stop genocides happening, and now it is being used to justify genocide instead. I feel maybe the UN might break down if something doesn't get resolved."

On the role of the Labor government and the Australian media, she responded: "I'm pretty disgusted, but also Zionists are pretty powerful in Australia, which I am pretty surprised to see how much influence they have over the ABC, the media, and how none of this information is getting out. I think it is in line with how much pressure they're getting from the Zionist lobby, so I can see how they're finding it hard to move. But at the end of the day you've got to have a moral position and they're very disappointing in that."

Christina expressed support for rank and file working class action against the Israeli onslaught, saying, "Yes, I mean what are the other options, people are going to have to rise up and do these other actions."



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