

Australian protests against Gaza genocide: “Governments are trying to suppress the opposition”

Our reporters
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Over the weekend thousands of protesters turned out in major cities in Australia, opposing the Israeli regime’s ongoing genocide against the Palestinian population in Gaza, backed by all the imperialist powers.

This is the twelfth consecutive week in which protests have occurred. There were around 10,000 in Melbourne and 5,000 in Sydney. It is significant that these protests went ahead the day before New Year’s Eve.

Attendees demanded an immediate ceasefire and condemned the Albanese Labor government’s role in supporting the genocide. Below are interviews from attendees at the Sydney and Melbourne rallies.

In Sydney the WSWS spoke to **Monika**, who said, “I have a three-year-old son, and I see these videos and images of children killed in Gaza, and in them, I see my son. When I think of the world overall, if we approve the killing of innocent children, there is no way back. Next time it could be our children.”

Speaking on the role of the US, she said, “There was the resolution for a ceasefire at the UN in early December, the US voted no. They are obviously profiting from wars and have been for decades. The UN resolution is a joke. Do we even need these bodies? How is it that a country that participates in genocide, is supporting genocide, has the power of veto?”

“For the last 20 years the US has bombed numerous countries. I think there is a bigger plan. What is happening in Gaza can happen anywhere else in the world. I don’t support Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but this was prepared for decades and is in the geopolitical interests of the US. I am originally from a neighbouring European country so have been following it. It is presented that it is all Russia, but it is coming from the US.

“I don’t support the sending of arms to Ukraine or to Israel. I don’t support the sending of arms anywhere. There should be peaceful discussions leading to a ceasefire.”

Monika said she was “not really” surprised the Labor party supports the war. “I’m strongly against them, I would never vote for them. I can see they are not acting in the best interests of the people.

“In Palestine people are being suppressed, they don’t have electricity, they don’t have water, bombs are being dropped. It’s not the same here, but similar issues on a different scale face ordinary people. We can’t afford rent, electricity is through the roof, food, inflation. People are waking up.”

Sophie, a 20-year-old massage therapist, attended her first anti-Gaza genocide rally on Saturday. “I believe that Palestine should be free. I haven’t been involved enough and it’s very easy to feel jaded and useless so the least I can do is show up to a protest. It’s an increasingly dire situation and the lack of humanity from the rest of the world is jarring.

“The role of social media has made it public. There’s a growing anti-establishment sentiment. People are waking up to the inequity of capitalism, which is at the root of a lot of problems in the world. As long as our current model is at play, this is only going to get worse. Neo-liberal capitalism is ruining the planet.”

When asked if she was surprised by the support for the genocide by the Albanese government, Sophie said, “It’s pretty appalling considering what the Labor Party should be standing for. I know he [Albanese] used to be pro-Palestine when he was younger, but I wouldn’t say it’s super surprising.”

In Melbourne **Sarah**, a medical general practitioner, told the WSWS about efforts to intimidate and threaten

health workers involved in the movement to stop the Gaza genocide: “Since October 7 there was outrage expressed on our social media platform for doctors for the crisis that was occurring, all the violence occurring in Gaza. All this was then shut down by admin, saying that this is not a political forum to speak about the crisis.

“So, we created our own Facebook group, Australian & New Zealand Doctors for Palestine, where we thought it was a safe space. However, little did we know that there were moles within that group, screenshotting our posts and collecting them to send to the medical board to report all of us.

“I was one of those reported, even though I posted in a private group, it was said it was offensive to the Jewish people/colleagues, by another doctor who screenshotted it, so I’ve been reported twice to the medical board for posting. Now I have been doxxed, as part of a group of doctors who have been doxxed, which means that our posts, which were part of a private group, have now been put on Instagram, a public site, with defamatory comments.

“So underneath it’s got my name, my place of work, pictures of myself and my children, with comments saying that I am antisemitic, that I support the Holocaust, all these defamatory comments, and saying, ‘would you trust this doctor in your care?’ and encouraging the general public to report me with my full name on it.

“This made me initially very scared, and I thought, ‘I can’t do anything anymore, I can’t say anything, I can’t speak out,’ however, we have all banded together, all those reported, to say no, this is an act of suppression, trying to suppress our voice. As doctors and health care professionals we are typically prominent in the community, people would hopefully respect our opinion, so they are probably targeting us more, to defame and shame us into silencing us.”

She continued, “It’s a big thing that we have decided, no, we can’t let this silence us. Let’s keep doing our acts of protest, of encouraging peace, and just continuing to do what we hoped to do in the first place. There is power in numbers, there is power in unity. What the government is trying to do and what is happening around the world is divide and conquer. They are trying to divide everyone. Even with this doxxing, they are trying to silence individuals, so that nobody says anything, and we are too afraid to speak to each other.”

Adam, a pharmacist originally from Egypt, said, “I am here to support Palestinians against the genocide committed by Israel and supported by the United States. I

am not here because I hate Jews, I have a lot of Jewish friends, and I don’t want what happened to them before, the Holocaust, to happen now to the Palestinians.”

On the Biden administration’s statement that there are no “red lines” for Israel’s military assault, Adam said, “When you tell a criminal that there is no red line, they will kill as many people as they can, because nobody will charge them, there are no consequences. The US is complicit with Israel in every step, and I guess we have to boycott the US as well, not just Israel.”

On the Labor government’s backing for the genocide, he stated, “I am ashamed because the Australian government announced from the first day that they support Israel, and I felt ashamed because I thought the Australian government would be fairer and support justice. The government doesn’t look to the huge protests every week. This is not a democracy because a lot of Australian people now support the Palestinians, but the Australian government tends to have special interests for themselves, they try to gain profits and don’t look to Australians protesting like this.”

Lily, a high school student, said: “I’ve been following the situation in Gaza mainly on social media. I know social media isn’t always the most reliable source, but neither is mainstream journalism. There’re a lot of different perspectives that you need to take into consideration. I’ve been watching a lot of direct footage.”

She spoke about the protest movement and the question of turning to the international working class, “We can’t stop the genocide directly, as we don’t technically have the power to control governmental policies, but we can force the government’s hand to assist in stopping this. I agree with what you raise. The working class is quite large, and they often don’t have a lot of choice in things, because they don’t have direct power in this. While voting does help, there’s a limit to who you can vote for, so I guess that leads to more power being centred in politicians, who often make the choices for us, that we have to abide by.”



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