

British health workers support struggle against Zionist witch hunting of Australian doctors

Our reporters
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Last month, the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee (HWRFC) in Australia passed a resolution condemning the Zionist witch hunting and doxxing of doctors and other health workers who have spoken out against the Israeli military's onslaught against the Palestinian population in Gaza.

The targeted medical workers, who have been falsely accused of antisemitism, include doctors, nurses, psychologists, midwives, optometrists, paramedics, pharmacists and physiotherapists, many of them women and with Middle Eastern names.

The HWRFC resolution followed a petition issued by the Australian Islamic Medical Association and Australian and New Zealand Doctors for Palestine. Addressed to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), the Medical Board of Australia and the Health Care Complaints Commission, it urges them to oppose these attempts to silence health workers opposing the Gaza genocide.

AHPRA, the country's principal medical regulatory and discipline body, has not responded to the petition but admitted that there have been at least 59 complaints, many of them anonymous, with 39 individuals currently being "investigated."

The HWRFC resolution resolved to defend all victimised medical practitioners, and called on workers, students and youth in Australia and internationally to send statements denouncing these bullying attacks and defending health workers' rights to oppose the Gaza genocide.

The *World Socialist Web Site* is publishing below statements it received this week from the NHS Fightback group in Britain and from the convenor of the Pathology Workers Rank and File Safety Committee in Australia. We urge health workers, students and workers to support

this campaign by emailing statements of support to the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee here that we will publish in the coming days.

NHS Fightback in Britain

Dear brothers and sisters,

NHS Fightback, uniting healthcare workers in Britain against the dismantling and privatisation of the National Health Service [NHS], stands in solidarity with our colleagues in Australia who are being persecuted for their opposition to Israel's genocide in Gaza.

After three months of continuous military bombardment by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the situation in Gaza is catastrophic. More than 26,751 Palestinians have been killed, including 10,000 children. At least 65,636 have been wounded.

Israel has targeted hospitals, medical clinics and ambulances with missile strikes, cluster bombs, drone attacks and armed raids. In October, Al-Durra Children's Hospital was pounded with flesh-burning white phosphorous. More than 337 doctors, nurses, paramedics and ambulance drivers have been killed.

On January 26, the UN's International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's actions fall within the definition of genocide.

Healthcare workers not only have a right to protest Israel's assault on Palestinian civilians; it is our duty to do so. Irrespective of language, nationality, ethnicity or religion, our profession is committed to the protection of human life.

In Britain, healthcare workers have been at the forefront of mass popular opposition to the Gaza genocide. An open letter to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) protesting its support for Israel's actions, including its decision to fly Israel's flag over DHSC

headquarters in London, has been signed by more than 10,000 health professionals.

In November, hundreds of doctors, nurses and health professionals held a vigil outside 10 Downing Street demanding a ceasefire. They held up 189 placards, each naming a healthcare worker killed by the IDF. One month later, thousands of NHS workers marched through central London to protest Israel's mass murder of Palestinian civilians while hundreds more have joined vigils outside their hospital.

The witch hunt against health professionals in Australia must and will be opposed. It is part of an assault on democratic rights by governments that are backing Israel's war crimes to the hilt. In Britain, Europe and the United States health workers are facing professional censure and even the prospect of criminal prosecution for opposing genocide.

There is a culture of fear in the NHS about speaking up over Gaza. Pro-Zionist social media accounts have urged members of the public to report healthcare workers for posting pro-Palestine statements. Doctors in Britain have been portrayed as terrorist sympathisers, with headlines that " Hamas-excusing medics are lurking within our NHS" (*Daily Mail*).

Several doctors have been reported to the General Medical Council [GMC] for statements condemning Israel's genocide. In a letter to the GMC, the British Islamic Medical Association, which has 6,000 members, warned that accusations against health professionals were being "weaponised to silence critics without any basis or evidence."

The fact that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is investigating complaints against 39 medical practitioners for the "crime" of opposing genocide is a warning to health workers around the world. It sets a precedent for the suspension and deregistration of health professionals for their political or humanitarian views.

The health unions have not and will not challenge this witch-hunt. The British Medical Association issued a statement in November on "the legality of doctors expressing views about the conflict", declaring that freedom of expression "must be balanced within context and the limits of the law." It noted gratuitously that "promotion of terrorism and hate speech are not acceptable freedom of expression," giving credence to the ongoing witch hunt equating opposition to Israel with antisemitism, hate speech and domestic terrorism.

NHS Fightback joins with the Health Workers Rank-

and-File Committee in Australia to demand that AHPRA drop its investigations into vexatious and politically motivated complaints against medical professionals. We support the call for a global fightback by health workers to end the war on Gaza, and to defend all colleagues victimised for courageously opposing the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Fraternally,
Ajanta Silva

Pathology Workers Rank-and-File Safety Committee in Australia

I have been a healthcare worker for over 20 years and fully support the democratic right of doctors, nurses and anyone voicing their opposition to war and genocide.

I was a refugee from the Vietnam War. I was a child during that war and so I feel a deep connection to the suffering of those children impacted by the conflict in Gaza who have zero say as to what happens to them. A world unsafe everywhere weighs heavily on a child's shoulder.

I always thank my patients when they tell me that they participated in protests during the Vietnam War. I had no say back then, but I have a voice now. It is our duty and our right to speak up against war and genocide.

The HWRFC resolution is a significant step in the fight against pro-Zionist efforts to muzzle health professionals and other members of the working class who speak out against Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

I applaud the Health Workers Rank and File Committee's condemnation of Zionists and other extreme-right groups that falsely accuse individuals opposed to war and genocide in Gaza of antisemitism for opposing Israel's military assault on the whole Palestinian population in Gaza. Doxxing and the victimisation of doctors and other health workers in Australia and across the world must be rejected by all workers.

Yours sincerely,

Suphor Samurtharb, convenor of the Pathology Workers Rank-and-File Safety Committee



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