

Health workers in Sri Lanka and Australia denounce the doxxing of Australian medical practitioners speaking out against Gaza genocide

Our reporters
16 February 2024

The Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee (HWRFC) in Australia has received more statements protesting the victimisation, doxxing and possible deregistration of scores of medical practitioners who have spoken out against the ongoing war crimes being committed by the Israeli military in Gaza. The HWRFC passed a resolution on January 17 pledging to defend all victimised medical practitioners and calling on workers, students and youth in Australia and internationally to send statements denouncing these bullying pro-Israeli military slanders.

According to recent reports, at least 39 health workers are currently being investigated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) after being falsely accused of antisemitism by Zionist forces. All they did was condemn war crimes.

Appeals by the victimised doctors and health workers to AHPRA, the Medical Board of Australia, and Australia's Human Rights Commissioner, and a petition initiated by the Australian Islamic Medical Association and ANZ Doctors for Palestine, signed by almost 7,500 medical practitioners, have been ignored by government and medical authorities.

The Albanese Labor government, which aggressively supports Israel's genocidal attacks on the Palestinians in Gaza, is fully aware of the victimisation and doxxing of pro-Palestine health workers—the doctors' petition was launched in December—but has said nothing.

That was until last week, when the Labor government suddenly became concerned about the leaking of the contents of a secret WhatsApp group titled "J.E.W.I.S.H Australian creatives and academics." The group, which had been organised by pro-Zionist elements, was established to support the extreme-right Netanyahu regime and to target pro-Palestine activists.

On Monday, Prime Minister Albanese told the media that releasing information about the WhatsApp group was antisemitic and that his government was planning to introduce

new legislation that would ban doxxing.

While few details have been released about the planned laws, Labor is preparing measures that will constitute a far-reaching attack on democratic rights and ban any exposure of the sort of witch-hunting activities that have been carried out against pro-Palestine health workers and others determined to expose the war crimes committed in Gaza.

The HWRFC urges all medical practitioners to speak out against the victimisation of their colleagues and other workers to send statements and letters of support. This week we received two letters from Australian health workers and a powerful statement from health staff in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan statement was sent after a two-day national strike by tens of thousands of public hospital workers for increased allowances. It opposes Israel's ethnic cleansing attacks on Palestinians in Gaza and explains the repressive measures that have been instituted by the Sri Lankan government to ban doctors and other health workers from exposing the disastrous impact of government cuts on the public health system.

Statements have already been published from NHS Fightback in Britain, the convenor of the Pathology Rank-and-File Workers group in Australia, the Australian and New Zealand Doctors for Palestine, and a Queensland public hospital doctor. Please send statements to the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee here.

* * *

Health Workers Action Committee in Sri Lanka

We, members of the Health Workers Action Committee in Sri Lanka, are dedicated to opposing the IMF-dictated austerity measures imposed by the Wickremesinghe government and the betrayal of workers' struggles for their rights by the official trade unions. We express our solidarity with our colleagues in Australia who have faced persecution by Zionists for their opposition to the Israeli aggression in Gaza under the

leadership of Netanyahu, with the support of the Western imperialist powers.

In Gaza, over 35,000 people, including over 30,000 civilians and more than 300 healthcare workers, have been killed in Israel's genocidal war. The deliberate destruction of hospitals and healthcare facilities has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

In Sri Lanka, the 26-year-long communal war waged by successive governments against the separatist LTTE resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives of Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims, and severely impacted the living conditions of many more. According to UN estimates, at least 40,000 Tamil civilians were killed during the final months of the war.

As healthcare workers in Sri Lanka, we have witnessed the anti-democratic attacks by the government on workers over the past few decades, especially those who speak out about the healthcare crisis in Sri Lanka due to austerity measures of the government. Those who have raised concerns have been targeted, with their jobs suspended. Currently, the government is attempting to suppress the exposure of the healthcare sector's crisis by imposing anti-democratic laws.

Last year, university students, staff members, and some media workers in Sri Lanka protested against the genocide in Gaza. The Wickremasinghe government has agreed to deploy naval ships to the Red Sea ostensibly to protect commercial vessels from attacks by Houthi rebels, who are pressuring Israel and its allies to halt the war in Gaza.

The members of the Health Workers Action Committee in Sri Lanka vehemently oppose and condemn the targeting and harassment of doctors and other healthcare workers who speak out against the Israeli military's brutal attacks on the Palestinian people in Gaza by Zionists.

Healthcare professionals must speak out against any actions that jeopardise civilian lives, including the recent events in Gaza. Despite our diverse backgrounds, our profession is committed to upholding the sanctity of human life and promoting health for all.

We offer our support to the defense campaign conducted by the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Australia and will encourage health workers and other sections of workers in Sri Lanka to organise and join this campaign to protect our targeted health workers in Australia.

John Mackay, New South Wales public hospital clinical scientist

The genocide in Gaza is a war crime and one that has changed the consciousness of masses of workers and young people around the world as evidenced by the significant and weekly protests worldwide.

Doctors and health workers are speaking out against the killing of 30,000 or more Palestinians in Gaza, almost half of them children, because they cannot and will not remain silent about these crimes and the direct involvement of governments in the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, France, Australia and

others in this barbarity.

Health workers by virtue of their chosen profession have earned their place to play a leading role in this fight to defend life and humanity. Their decision to oppose the Gaza genocide is not antisemitism, as claimed by the Zionist forces, but a genuinely humane and internationalist response against the mass murder and barbaric destruction being carried out by the Israeli military.

It is, moreover, a clear expression of the fact that there is mass global opposition to militarism and war. This strikes fear into governments, which are preparing future, even more horrendous, military conflicts and are determined to silence and stamp out this mass antiwar sentiment.

This is what is behind the Zionists' use of the "complaint processes" of AHPRA and Australian government agencies that are supposed to uphold public health and medical standards to target and victimise health workers. The refusal of the health unions and other medical bodies to oppose the Gaza genocide and to defend our rights must also be exposed.

This disturbing development constitutes a direct assault on freedom of speech, not just of medical practitioners but all sections of the working class, and must be vigorously opposed.

I urge health workers to speak out and defend our victimised colleagues. Our response to these attacks cannot be to retreat but to fight back with a loud voice and unifying action to oppose the Gaza genocide and imperialism, the social system that has produced this catastrophe and which is driven by private profit and operates in complete disregard for human need, human life and public health.

I am old enough to remember the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by the United States and its allies, including Australia, and all the blatant lies told about "weapons of destruction" to justify the destruction of that country and one million Iraqi citizens. Twenty years on I'm not prepared to allow even more sinister crimes to be committed or to remain silent to the danger of a third world war.

Mark Stapleton, a health worker from Brisbane, Queensland

I am a retired registered nurse and deplore not only the genocide in Gaza but also the Western governments' (including Australia's) support for this war and also the war against Russia and China using Ukrainian and Taiwanese blood.

I absolutely support health workers right to speak out about war crimes without being labelled antisemitic. The Australian government, unions and media should support these health workers against hostile actions by lobby groups.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact