

More Australian health workers speak out in solidarity with their doxxed colleagues and in opposition to the Gaza genocide

Our reporters
1 March 2024

The Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee (HWRFC) is stepping up its campaign against the targeting of medical professionals who have spoken out against the atrocities committed by the Israeli military in Gaza. In a resolution passed on January 17, the HWRFC condemned the witch hunts and doxing campaigns orchestrated by Zionist forces against health workers who have condemned the Gaza genocide and ongoing war crimes committed by Israel's Netanyahu government.

These targeted individuals, falsely accused of antisemitism, represent a diverse spectrum of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, and other health workers, many of whom are women and with Middle Eastern names. Despite being singled out and subjected to harassment and intimidation, they refuse to be silenced.

The HWRFC resolution was prompted by a petition issued by the Australian Islamic Medical Association and Australian and New Zealand Doctors for Palestine, urging regulatory bodies such as the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to oppose these egregious attempts to stifle dissent within the healthcare community.

AHPRA, however, has yet to respond to the questions posed on the petition. At least 39 individuals are currently under investigation, their professional reputations and livelihoods hanging in the balance as they face baseless accusations.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has already published statements from NHS Fightback in Britain, the Pathology Rank-and-File Workers group in Australia, the Australian and New Zealand Doctors for Palestine and the Sri Lankan Health Workers Action Committee and numerous individual health workers.

The HWRFC has called for more solidarity statements from medical professionals and other sections of the working class in Australia and internationally to oppose this unprecedented attack on freedom of speech and democratic rights. Statements and letters of support can be sent to these addresses:

Email: sephw.aus@gmail.com

Twitter: @HealthRandF_Aus

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/hwrfcaus

We also urge medical professionals to attend and spread the word about the Socialist Equality Party's forthcoming public meetings: "How to stop the genocide in Gaza" in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle early next month. Meeting dates and times, and registration details, are available here.

Today we publish two statements of support—one from Tahnee, an acute care and mental health nurse in Victoria, and another from Lisa, disability health worker from New South Wales.

Tahnee, a highly experienced acute care and mental health nurse from Melbourne, has worked in rural and remote areas, particularly in Far North Queensland. She sent the following statement:

I've been a registered nurse for over a decade, and I stand in solidarity with anyone who has spoken out against the ongoing genocide being committed without impunity against the Palestinians not only in Gaza but also in the West Bank.

It deeply troubles me to hear about the harassment, threats and possible deregistration faced by healthcare workers for simply advocating for the rights of Palestinians and condemning the murder of innocents. The AHPRA investigation is concerning and indicative of a broader trend of silencing dissenting voices. AHPRA must reject all attempts to silence healthcare workers and must uphold the principles of free speech. We should not be penalised for speaking truth to power.

The IDF have destroyed hospitals in Gaza with health care workers being murdered or subjected to torture and humiliation. It feels wrong to stay silent and ignore the truth. Health care workers, as advocates for health and well-being, have a moral obligation to speak out against injustice and advocate for the rights of all individuals, regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

The false accusations of antisemitism aimed at health care workers is a deliberate attempt to hush legitimate criticism of state sanctioned violence and only serves to protect oppressive systems of power. It is disturbing to suggest that opposing genocide is tantamount to antisemitism. It is not antisemitic to oppose the policies of the Israeli government nor to advocate

for justice and equality for the Palestinians.

Zionism, like any political ideology, can be subject to criticism and that does not equate to the hatred of Jewish people. Advocating for peace and justice is a call to uphold human rights and international law. It's a stance against injustice and oppression. Such baseless accusations deflect attention from the real issues at hand and undermines any efforts to hold perpetrators of war crimes accountable.

It's crucial to acknowledge that the Palestinians are indigenous to Palestine and have no alternative homeland. They urgently need protection and assistance. This genocide is a stark reminder of the complicity of the Western world in upholding systems of violence, oppression and injustice. Despite the clear evidence of war crimes and human rights violations, the international community, particularly Western powers, have failed to hold Israel accountable for its actions. This indifference coupled with the continuous support of Israel, underscores the inherent supremacist ideologies embedded within Western societies, where the lives and rights of people of colour are systematically devalued and ignored. All governments have a responsibility to protect any civilian from human rights abuses and to hold the perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Failure to do so sends a clear message that the Western world values profit and material gain over human lives and dignity.

The struggle for Palestinian liberation is a universal struggle against imperialism and oppression. Injustice affects us all, when one group is oppressed, it undermines the rights and freedoms of everyone. The liberation of all beings is interconnected. Allowing the Palestinian genocide to continue unchecked sets a dangerous precedent that threatens the very fabric of our humanity. If we turn a blind eye to such atrocities, we embolden oppressors and pave the way for future genocides to occur. It is imperative that we stand up against oppression in all its forms before it's too late.

I encourage everyone to stand in unwavering solidarity and support for anyone brave enough to speak up against oppression and the injustices of the world. Together we can work towards decolonisation and the dismantling of all systems of oppression. Let's pursue a world built on peace, where all rights are respected, and all beings are free to live with dignity and self-determination.

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Lisa, a disability health worker from Katoomba in New South Wales, says:

I'm a disability worker wracked and sickened by the Israeli Zionist mass slaughter and traumatising of the Palestinian population. Amidst the rubble and devastation, hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities are facing impossible challenges and complete disregard for their basic human rights.

No moral person can stay silent about the horrors unfolding in Gaza and health workers have an added responsibility to their

profession and their Palestinian colleagues to speak out against the genocide—the violation of basic rights to medical care, the targeting of hospitals and healthcare workers and the deliberate murder, maiming, starvation and displacement of men, women and children.

The smear and doxxing campaigns targeting healthcare workers who are speaking out is abhorrent and must be exposed and fought. The mainstream media and the political and medical establishment who facilitate or ignore these attacks must also be exposed.

In this world turned upside down, speaking out against Zionism and genocide is being falsely labelled as antisemitic. The proposed new anti-doxxing laws announced by Labor are not being developed in response to the doxxing of dozens of Australian nurses and doctors by Zionist groups, but in response to the leaking of the contents of a WhatsApp group "J.E.W.I.S.H. Australian Creatives and Academics," a group that has been instrumental in targeting Palestinian activists and making vexatious complaints against them.

I am greatly concerned that Australians generally don't understand this and believe what they are being fed about the "dangerous" "rising tide" of antisemitism in Australia, harming, as intended, the movement to defend Palestine.

As the crisis of the world capitalist economic system intensifies and wars and the arms race proliferate, democratic rights are increasingly under attack. This is part of the wider context in which the campaigns against pro Palestine voices can be understood.

As evidenced by their complicit silence or at best isolated actions and statements on Gaza and the persecution of those who speak out against genocide, we can't rely on our associations or union leaderships to defend democratic rights. Nor can we rely on any of the so-called left-leaning parties whose political perspective is simply to appeal to Labor.

While class consciousness is not particularly fashionable in our world of identity politics, the international working class remains the force, which through mass strike action, has the power to end the genocide immediately. Union leaderships are not calling for mass strike action. The building of independent rank-and-file workers committees is required.

Thank you to the doctors and nurses speaking out against the atrocities and war crimes in Gaza. Sadly, in the current political it is a brave thing to do and comes with the risk of great professional and personal cost. You should be commended and defended.



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