

Australian health workers speak out against Zionist persecution of medical professionals

Our reporters
19 March 2024

Over the past five months pro-Zionist forces in Australia have weaponised the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's online "complaints procedure" to falsely accuse 39 health professionals of antisemitism. The allegations are solely based on the fact that they dared to publicly denounce Israel's genocidal attacks on Gaza that have now killed over 30,000 Palestinians, 70 percent of them women and children, and more than 370 health workers.

If upheld by Australian medical authorities, the bogus allegations, which have been hurled against doctors, nurses, psychologists, midwives, optometrists, paramedics, pharmacists and physiotherapists, could destroy their medical careers. The sole purpose of this highly orchestrated operation is to silence health workers from raising their voices against Israel's imperialist-backed ethnic-cleansing.

On learning of the Zionist thuggery against Australian health workers, the Health Workers Rank and File Committee (HWRFC) initiated a campaign on January 17 to defend all victimised medical practitioners and called on health workers everywhere to send statements of support.

Since issuing its appeal the HWRFC has received numerous statements from health workers in Australia and internationally passionately defending their fellow workers. Statements published on the *World Socialist Web Site* include from doctors and other health workers in Australia, as well as NHS Fightback in Britain, the Health Workers Action Committee in Sri Lanka, the convenor of the Pathology Rank and File Workers group in Australia, the Australian and New Zealand Doctors for Palestine and the Committee for Public Education.

By contrast, Australian medical authorities, as well as doctors' medical associations and the health unions have not issued a single statement condemning the political bullying and victimisation of their members.

Today we are publishing a conversation with a health worker from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney and a letter from a retired nurse who has worked in many different fields across Australia. We urge health staff, students and workers to back the HWRFC's campaign by sending statements and letters of support to these addresses:

Email: sephw.aus@gmail.com

Twitter: @HealthRandF_Aus

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/hwrfcaus

Carey, a Royal Prince Alfred health worker, spoke with HWRFC members at a recent pro-Palestine protest vigil outside Sydney Town Hall.

What would you like to say about the Zionist attacks on doctors in Australia who have opposed the Gaza genocide?

Carey: I think it's absolutely absurd. It's nothing more than a bare-faced attempt to intimidate professionals who have a certain level of community respect and authority because of the nature of their work and their position in society. They are afforded this as health workers, as medical professionals.

To attack journalists is bad enough but to attack medical professionals and threaten their careers when our healthcare system is already under so much strain and in danger of collapsing is absolutely criminal.

Did you ever think health workers would be subjected to this sort of attack on their freedom of speech?

Carey: No, but I find myself asking that question in regard to every aspect of this current genocide. I never thought I'd see an entire city's hospital shut down by heavy artillery. Nor did I ever expect to see the sort of mass killing that we are now witnessing on social media and which has become a daily occurrence. In fact, there's no atrocity that I've anticipated and it's absolutely horrifying.

I never thought I'd see an Israeli film maker [Anat Schwartz] suddenly become a foreign war correspondent and be able to publish blatant lies about Hamas beheading babies and sexually assaulting people, and that this be given credence and published in the *New York Times*.

Nor did I expect to see Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who was one of the founders of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, face possible legal action in the International Criminal Court, not only for being complacent but being complicit in the genocide of Palestinians.

Medical professionals are being attacked by the Zionists for making these sorts of comments, for speaking out against these war crimes, but there has only been silence from the health workers unions. What do you think of that?

Carey: All my expectations have been shaken by the situation in Gaza but the response of the unions to this genocide has seen my worse expectations fully confirmed.

Although I'm a member of the Health Services Union [HSU], I'm someone who has long since abandoned any hope in our union leadership. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote an article in late December stating that HSU Secretary Gerard Hayes was deeply concerned because some HSU members had attempted to break ranks and speak out against the war crimes in Palestine. The article claimed HSU members were trying to "highjack" union banners.

Hayes told the newspaper that he had been emailed by some HSU members asking whether they could bring HSU flags to the protest rallies every weekend at Hyde Park. Hayes categorically and publicly rejected the request and was praised in the newspaper for his so-called "even-handed approach."

What would you say to other health workers about this attack on freedom of speech? What should they do? What's the way forward?

They should know that although a precedent has now been set against health care workers who have spoken out, they refuse to back down or be intimidated. Health workers should also know that we are stronger as a collective and that we are part of a large community of like-minded individuals.

We all know implicitly that the government is acting against our best interests in this, and every other issue, and that it is using our taxpayer money to commit atrocities overseas and within our borders that no right-thinking person would condone. It is imperative for us to stand united against the Gaza genocide, and the only way we can do that is by joining the voices of those who have already spoken out.

I hope that people are not intimidated by the doxxing and the ridiculous punitive methods being used by the Zionists and look instead to the examples of people who have continued to speak out regardless of the threats. We must be guided by doing what's right, by certain moral imperatives. There is a way forward and being targeted by the Zionists is actually not the black mark that some might think it is. We have the capacity and, more than that, the duty to turn the tide on the situation we find ourselves in. We need to speak up and speak out.

Jane, a retired nurse from Melbourne, has worked in numerous hospitals and health facilities across Australia. She sent the following email:

Freedom of speech is something Australians may have taken for granted; as long as what is said does not incite hatred or slander, a person or group is/are free to express their opinions.

A group of medical and Allied Health people have recently been advocating for peace in Gaza. They want to draw attention to the plight of medical people in Gaza and the West Bank who are trying to save the lives of the wounded brought to them in the hospitals. These hospitals are being bombed because the Israeli military claims that Hamas are hiding in them.

Our government condemned the October 7th attack by Hamas in Israel and most Australians supported this opinion but now, some five months later and with many thousands of deaths, we want our government to condemn the continual killing and destruction of Palestine. We want peace, we want all governments involved to work towards this because it is the right thing to do; enough of death, it is time to talk and plan for a better future.

A sad factor occurring as a consequence of these rallies for peace is that many of the organisers have had bogus complaints made against them to their governing bodies and suggesting that because they want peace in Gaza they are antisemitic. Nothing could be further from the truth. Peace is a human right, not a religious right.

Medical people understand the deprivations that occur during wars because they know the stresses and pressure of trying to heal damaged bodies quickly, let alone when under bombardment.

If we believe in democracy then we must believe in everyone's right to free speech. We want to highlight the devastation that is occurring in Gaza and demand that our government stand up in defence of the wounded and the medical people and the citizens struggling to stay alive. Australia should be a voice of reason in this world that we share.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact