

UN Rapporteur: Australian government is “aiding and abetting” genocide in Gaza

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Addressing an Australian audience on Wednesday, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Michael Fakhri bluntly condemned the federal Labor government for “aiding and abetting a genocide and starvation” in Gaza.

Speaking at an online forum organised by the Australian Human Rights Institute at the University of New South Wales, Fakhri painted a harrowing picture of the conditions created by the Israeli onslaught.

“We have never seen a civilian population made to go hungry so completely and so quickly...in modern history” Fakhri said. “We are not only witnessing people documenting their own experience of genocide in real time ... we’re seeing the images of people, adults and children, as they die from starvation and this is the part that’s very unique.”

Turning to the role of the Labor government, the UN expert declared: “I’m talking to an Australian audience and I know the Australian government has provided military support” to the Israeli offensive. “The time will come where the Australian government will be held accountable for aiding and abetting in a genocide and starvation,” he warned.

Those statements are a welcome and needed blow to the Labor government’s attempts to distance itself from the war crimes that it has supported. Labor leaders are engaged in the most cynical attempt to dupe the population. Having aggressively backed Israel’s bombardment for months, and while continuing to support the Zionist onslaught, Labor is presenting itself as a bystander with no direct involvement in the war.

In addition to Fakhri’s statements, this campaign of lies was further discredited this week by an exclusive article published by *Declassified Australia*. Labor ministers have repeatedly asserted that Australia does not send weapons to Israel and has not in the past five years. They have denounced any claims to the contrary as disinformation.

However, as the article explained: “The latest data obtained by *Declassified Australia* shows that Australia has issued 383 defence export permits to Israel since 2015, and by extrapolation the overwhelming majority are clearly Munitions List items, not Dual Use equipment.” Of “230 export permits to Israel between 1 July 2015 and 31 March 2021,” 187, or 81 percent “were for ‘munitions list’ items. Forty-four of those munitions list permits were approved within the past five years.”

In a transparent attempt to keep the population in the dark, the data provided by Defence “covering the period 1 July 2020 to 29 January 2024” does not provide any breakdown between munitions items and those marked as dual use, which could be of military or civilian use. In those four years, there were 173 defence exports to Israel.

The secrecy itself is damning. If there was nothing to hide, the information would not be hidden. By seeking to prevent any scrutiny of the breakdown of defence exports, the authorities are in effect confirming that Australia has in the recent past exported weapons to Israel.

It is already known that a Melbourne company is the sole global supplier of a key component of the F-35 fighter jets that Israel has used to drop bombs on Gaza. Australia hosts a centre for artificial intelligence operated by Elbit Systems, the main Israeli weapons company, funded by the Victorian state Labor government.

More generally, the Australian arms industry, universities and other government-funded institutions are entwined in a complex global supply chain involving behemoths such as Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems, which arm the Zionist regime.

As *Declassified Australia* noted, the Labor leaders appear to be suggesting that “weapons exports” would only include such things as fully-assembled guns and ready-to-shoot missiles. That contradicts the Defence Department’s own munitions list, and would exclude things, such as the F-35 components, that are plainly

aiding the direct military operations of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

The government has also hidden the contents of a defence Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) struck with Israel in 2017 and still in operation. In response to a freedom of information request from the Greens, the Defence Department refused to release the MoU or anything relating to it, on the grounds that the information “could harm Australia's international standing and reputation.”

The Defence response declared that a key reason for the suppression was that “the document contains information communicated to Australia by a foreign government and its officials under the expectation that it would not be disclosed.” The foreign government is almost certainly Israel. In other words, Defence, acting under the direction of the government, is protecting both Labor and the Israeli state from any public scrutiny.

These revelations provide the framework within which Labor's professions of anger over Israel's murder of seven World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid workers last week must be judged. Having openly or tacitly supported Israel's murder of more than 30,000 Palestinians, and having said nothing about its killing of close to 200 other aid workers, the Labor leaders were shocked that the Zionist state would attack the WCK staff.

The details of the WCK attack are already clear. Israel launched three separate missile strikes on a convoy of the charity workers, having been informed of and cleared their position previously. This was a deliberate component of the strategy of starving the Gazan population outlined by UN Rapporteur Fakhri.

Labor, however, as part of its attempts to dampen-down popular anger, is calling for an “investigation,” to be carried out by Israel itself, and “full accountability,” whatever that means.

The character of the charade was exposed on Monday, when Labor announced that it would appoint Mark Binskin as its “special advisor” to the Israeli investigation.

Binskin is a career military man, having previously been Australian Defence Chief. During the criminal US-led wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, he was responsible for all Coalition air operations, including those of the Americans. Binskin is now a non-executive director of BAE Systems' Australian branch, a weapons company with extensive ties to Israel. To describe this as putting the fox in charge of the hen house would be an understatement.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, a phony discussion continues in the political and media establishment, over whether Labor is “hardening” its stance on Israel.

The latest episode in this bogus debate was a speech delivered by Foreign Minister Penny Wong at the Australian National University on Tuesday. Media reportage implied that Wong had unveiled a significant shift in Labor policy by floating the prospect of a preemptive recognition of Palestinian statehood. Was this “rewarding the Hamas terrorists,” right-wing pundits asked.

If one reads the actual speech, Wong simply restated the longstanding position of Labor, which is for a “two-state solution.” As Israel's current campaign of ethnic-cleansing makes clear, such a “solution” will never occur, and even if it did, the outcome would be an unviable Palestinian mini-state, ruled over by right-wing Palestinian leaders acting as agents of the Zionists and imperialists.

Wong again declared that Hamas had “no place” in any future Palestine, signaling support for Israel's ongoing war. She said even the Palestinian Authority would have to be “reformed”—that is, made even more submissive, despite already functioning as a US and Israeli puppet.

Wong launched a diatribe against opponents of the genocide, accusing them of “disinformation” and “lies” without providing any evidence. “It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens,” she declared. This “imperils our democracy.”

Translated into plain English, any denunciation of the government and its foreign minister for their role in the genocide is impermissible.



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