

Australian protesters speak against Israel's genocide in Gaza and complicity of imperialist governments

Our reporters
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For almost eight months, weekly protests have continued in Australia's major cities against Israel's genocidal onslaught against Palestinians in Gaza.

The rallies last weekend in Melbourne and Sydney were among the largest this year, reflecting deepening anger and opposition among workers and young people over the ethnic-cleansing operation, especially the latest offensive in Rafah.

Organisers, including from pseudo-left parties such as Socialist Alternative, continue to peddle the bankrupt line of appealing to the Labor government to end its support for Israel. This position covers up the fact that the genocide is part of a broader eruption of imperialist militarism. It serves to subordinate protesters to the very government that is frenetically denouncing all opposition to the genocide as an illegitimate attack on so-called "social cohesion."

Reporters for the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with several of the approximately 20,000 demonstrators at the Melbourne protest rally.

Nada is a Palestinian-Australian, working as a construction project manager. She explained: "My dad is from a village called Silat ad-Dhahr, which is in West Bank, and my mother is actually from Ramle, which is internationally now known as within Israel. I get to experience firsthand how it affects each one of them because of the different regions that they are from. They discuss the possibility of a two-state solution, but then what would that make my mum?"

"At the end of the day, even if they did agree to that, you are still rewarding the occupation that is happening, and you are trying to push under the rug the pain that has happened from the 1948 period as well. My dad's cousin, he's currently in Israeli

administrative detention—he has been there a while as well—just for protesting against what is happening."

On the role of US imperialism, she added: "If you look at the history of Biden, he has always been a self-professed Zionist. And I think what should be pointed out with that is that Zionism and Judaism are totally different—they don't equal each other."

Nada spoke about the connection between the Gaza genocide and the escalation of war threats around the world: "I think the US finds that in its military, they have the power. They are the ones that threatened the Middle East, just to be able to use it for what's happening now. As we all know, that region is full of resources such as oil and gas, and we are finding through research that there are those elements in Gaza too. I believe it is for that cause and they will work to eliminate Palestine just to get those resources. I believe that it is all connected at the end of the day—war is profit, and the small people will always stay small.

"But we are now rising above, and hopefully we can overturn that. I think that, this time around, because we have the benefit of social media, more people are more open to what is happening, and are now questioning what their previous stances were."

Peter, a high school music teacher, said: "It seems to me that voices need to be raised so that people who are supposed to be democratically representing us understand that we oppose what is happening, and these people need to change their views and their policies in Australia to show that we oppose what is happening."

On the global movement against the Gaza genocide, he responded: "It's absolutely heart-warming—I am so happy to see people turning out to peacefully support anti-genocide, and to show each other around the world

that what is happening is terrible, and that we stand both with Jewish safety as well as with Palestinian safety. What Israel is doing—they burn the scars on their own soul, by doing this supposedly for their own safety, it's nonsense. Conducting this war makes everybody less safe, Israelis, Palestinians, and the rest of us."

Vilan's family is originally from Sri Lanka, and he works as a chef while studying community services at university. He explained why he was attending the rally: "It's quite simple, the genocide that is happening, I can't just sit and watch. Every little way that you can do something, you do it. On what's happening in Rafah, I'm not surprised—the Israelis' call has always been to just wipe the Palestinians out and settle."

Philip owns a small business. He said: "It's quite obvious we are being manipulated by a Zionist regime that seems to be centring from America and American politics, and the money they are making from their donations. It's enough to turn a blind eye to genocide, and to wipe an entire people out for profit, and it's so deep that it affects our government here, to the point where they can say things like 'let's ban the slogan, From the River to the Sea,' and falsely label this as extremely violent. Where does the Gaza genocide fit in with that? No-one in their right mind can support this atrocity—yet our government is."

"The Labor Party is all about business, it's not about being equal at all. You look at all the people who have been coming here [to the rallies] for the last eight months, and no one is listening. It's hidden in the media, I don't know what to make of it. I am confused—what does it mean? Do we need a rising up from the people?"

"No one here is violent or wants violence, and obviously accusations of antisemitism are a joke. However, more and more I am seeing that there's pro-Israeli groups organising to cause conflict. Students out at Monash University, they have been there at the encampment for weeks, and then we saw a group of pro-Israelis causing the trouble. And the government's prepared to put up with that. I think the student demonstrators are the heroes of today. My son has mild cerebral palsy—I had to take him to a hospital appointment in Monash, and I took him to see the students, the encampments, and I introduced them as heroes to him. What they are putting on the line and

what they are giving is amazing."

At another recent protest, outside Sydney Town Hall, WSWs reporters spoke to **Mark**, a retired academic.

He said: "Since October 8th, when the IDF, the Israeli Defense Forces, went into Gaza, we've had an unfolding genocide before our eyes."

"I'm an Australian, but I've worked in the Middle East a lot. I've got friends on the West Bank. I know Palestinians in their diaspora around different parts of the world, and all I can say is that, you know, how can I stand by and be a bystander to genocide?"

"At the end of World War II, once people realised what had really happened in the concentration camps, in the Shoah, in the Holocaust, you know what people said? 'Never again.' They said, 'no, we're not going to be bystanders. We're going to speak out when we see violence.'"

"That's what this is about tonight. We're not going to stand by and allow genocide to continue to happen in this new century."

"All governments, whether they be in the global south, the Arab states, the Western nations, particularly the American leadership, they're all culpable. What's happened to the world when leaders endorse genocide?"

"What can we say about Albanese? He can no longer be considered a moral leader in any way of this nation. He's taken the wrong course. He hasn't spoken out, nor has his foreign minister. In fact, they continue to endorse what the Israeli government has done. Absolutely, the impunity with which they get away with genocide is unbelievable."

"You can feel and see the outrage here tonight. There's anger and grief at the number of people unnecessarily being killed at the moment. Rafah is actually the last available spot on that strip for people, after having been moved many, many times, from place to place."

"My Palestinian friends have said, 'they've pushed us around like animals.' And what is the world doing? Nothing."



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