

Australian Labor government issues phony condemnation of Israel's starvation of the Palestinians

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At a press conference yesterday, Australian Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese declared that Israel's ban on food and aid entering Gaza is "outrageous." The blockade has been denounced by humanitarian organisations and United Nations officials as a transparent attempt to exterminate the Palestinian population through starvation.

Albanese stated that "Australia finds these actions as completely unacceptable, and we find Israel's excuses and explanations completely untenable and without credibility. People are starving, and the idea that a democratic state withholds supply is an outrage."

Those comments have been widely cited in the press, with descriptions of them as Albanese's "strongest" statements against Israel.

In reality, the Labor government is cynically seeking to distance itself from a genocide that it has fully supported and will continue to support.

This is part of a coordinated operation, involving similar declarations from members of the US-led Five Eyes intelligence network, including the UK and Canada, as well as the European powers. All of them are shedding crocodile tears over Israel's implementation of a "final solution" to the Palestinians, which they have assisted politically, diplomatically and logistically.

In the media's attempts to aid Albanese in distancing his government from the unfolding atrocities, many of the outlets distorted what he had said.

Albanese had been asked by a journalist, not only about the aid blockade, but also about a "permanent occupation of the strip." That element of the question touched on the reality that Israel's starvation policy is one part of a strategy of ethnically-cleansing Gaza of its Palestinian inhabitants and seizing control of it.

Over recent weeks, Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have openly articulated

this aim, declaring that the Palestinians who are not killed must be transferred to third countries, in a war crime that recalls nothing so much as the Nazi Holocaust.

Albanese simply ignored that part of the question and refused to answer a follow-up question on his government's attitude to Palestinian statehood. Instead, he presented starvation as a "humanitarian crisis. That's the issue that we're concerned with."

In fact, Albanese's comments were more tepid than even those of European leaders. His government refused to sign a statement issued over the weekend by the UK, Canada and several other countries threatening Israel with sanctions if it did not cease the blockade. All that Albanese threatened were more mealy-mouthed statements and private representations.

At the same time, he again parroted the fraudulent Israeli justification for its slaughter. Albanese described Hamas as a "terrorist organisation" and insisted that it had "no role in the future of Gaza or the West Bank." Given that Israel describes virtually all Palestinians in Gaza, including civilians, as "Hamas," that is a carte blanche for endless mass murder.

Albanese's most significant comment was not reported by any of the Labor-aligned print media outlets. He said: "You know, Australia isn't a participant in any of this. And I make this point as well—people should not bring conflict here, which some of the acts of antisemitism have done, have attempted to do."

That statement combined two lies. One is a slander against the millions of workers and young people who oppose the genocide, accompanied by a threat of a continuing police-state crackdown against them.

The second claim, that Australia is uninvolved and that the Middle East is far away, was adopted by Labor in late 2023, in an attempt to deflect that mass opposition. It was

a slight shift in emphasis, but not in substance, from the policy of the government when Israel launched its onslaught against Gaza following the Palestinian military operation of October 7, 2023.

In those first months, the Labor administration was among the most open of the imperialist powers in its support for the Zionist offensive, a fact later acknowledged by senior Israeli leaders.

As the bombs were raining down and mass protests were erupting around the world, Albanese introduced into the Australian parliament an October 2023 resolution proclaiming that Australia “stands with Israel and recognises its inherent right to defend itself.” Albanese thundered hysterically against Hamas, defamed opponents of Israel as antisemites and insisted that his government would always stand with the Zionist state.

The truth is that the Israeli regime seized upon the October 7 operation, of which it was warned in advance, to set in motion long-prepared plans, now made explicit, to drive Palestinians out of Gaza, as part of a wider US-backed bid to assert wider control over the Middle East.

Albanese’s parliamentary display was one of a series cited by the law firm Birchgrove Legal when it referred Albanese and his Labor government to the International Criminal Court for complicity in genocide early last year.

The Birchgrove dossier cited dozens of examples of Labor ministers justifying clear Israeli war crimes, including the deliberate murder of civilians. Particularly relevant to Labor’s supposed concern over Israel’s current starvation operation was its response to the complete blockade of water, food and electricity imposed on Gaza after the October 7 operation.

As Israeli leaders compared the entire Palestinian population to Biblical enemies and declared that the blockade was aimed at eliminating them, Labor’s Foreign Minister Penny Wong refused to condemn the clear breach of international law, instead legitimising it.

The blockade “reminds us of the security situation Israel confronts,” Wong stated. “I think it’s always very difficult from over here to make judgements about what security approach other countries take. We’ve said Israel has a right to defend itself.”

As the Birchgrove dossier also noted, Labor’s claims that Australia is logistically uninvolved in the genocide are a sham. Security experts have stated it is almost certain that Israel used intelligence from the joint US-Australian Pine Gap spy base to target its airstrikes on Palestinians.

The Labor government, moreover, has continued to

approve military export permits to Israel.

Though they are shrouded in secrecy, it is known that a crucial part for the Israeli F-35 fighter jets that have dropped more bombs on Gaza than any place since World War II is produced exclusively in Melbourne, Australia.

In early 2024, Labor awarded Elbit Systems, the primary Israeli weapons company, with an Australian army contract worth almost \$1 billion. In April, pictures emerged of an Australian-manufactured R400 weapons system in Israel. The device, which looks like a modern-day cannon, was being examined by Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz.

Most fundamentally, the Labor government has pledged to collaborate as closely as possible on a global war drive with the fascistic US administration of President Donald Trump. When Trump proclaimed in February that the US would aid the total ethnic-cleansing of Gaza and seek to take control of it, Albanese repeatedly refused to condemn this Hitlerian plan.

“I’m not going to have a running commentary on statements by the President of the United States,” Albanese repeatedly stated.

The *Crikey* outlet last week published talking points prepared for the prime minister by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which *Crikey* had obtained via a freedom of information request. The DFAT bureaucrats, evidently concerned over the political and legal implications of Trump’s open statement of intent to commit a historic war crime, encouraged Albanese to state his governments opposition to any forced displacement of the Palestinians.

The fact that Albanese refused the advice was a signal to the Trump administration of Labor’s consent.

Labor won the May 3 federal election, because of a mass repudiation of the Liberal-National Coalition and its identification with Trump. But Albanese heads a right-wing, militarist government committed to collaborate with American imperialism in the mass slaughter in Gaza, the underlying US aggression throughout the Middle East, the war against Russia in Ukraine and the advanced US-led preparations for war against China in the Indo-Pacific.



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