

Australian workers and youth condemn US-Israeli ongoing genocide in Gaza

Our reporters
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On Sunday, tens of thousands of people marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to oppose Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and the role of Australian government in enabling it. The historic demonstration, held in defiance of police threats and government attempts to ban it, was one of the largest in Sydney's history.

Despite pouring rain and a concerted effort by the New South Wales (NSW) Labor government and police to suppress the event, the Harbour Bridge was flooded with protesters stretching its full length, with many more still massed in surrounding streets.

The crowd was estimated at 90,000 by police and up to 300,000 by organisers. In Melbourne, a similar rally took place the same day, where police blocked some 25,000 demonstrators from marching across the King Street Bridge.

As at previous rallies, speakers condemned the starvation campaign in Gaza and denounced the Albanese Labor government's complicity in the slaughter.

But even as they exposed the horrors being perpetrated, the rally's organisers promoted the dangerous illusion that the genocide can be ended by appealing to the very political establishment that is facilitating it.

This bankrupt perspective was summed up by Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi, who told the crowd the Labor government was moving "inch by inch" towards opposition to the genocide, when in reality it stands full square behind the Zionist regime and its US imperialist patron.

WSWS reporters spoke with participants at the demonstration and advanced the urgent necessity of building a socialist and international anti-war movement of the working class to end the genocide in Gaza and the escalating eruption of imperialist militarism internationally, of which it is a part.

Sarah, a disability support worker, said, "I came to the rally to protest the ongoing treatment of Gazans. It's been occurring since the 1920s, the occupation of their lands, the collective punishment that is wrongly labelled as Israel resisting Hamas. It's clear that that's not true, but is part of

this project to occupy Palestine.

"The Albanese government haven't done enough" she said. "People are here today because they don't want the Australian government to be complicit in any way."

"The geopolitical system is all connected and the people in power in every country are all benefiting from it. For them to admit there's a genocide occurring would make people realise the structural things that are wrong with our own system.

"This whole rhetoric that you're antisemitic for criticising the Israeli government is deceitful and its obfuscating what is really going on by denying it is happening."

On the state Labor government's failed attempt to have the protest banned in the courts, Sarah said, "They have been trying to roll back our right to protest for a long time. This is another reason why I'm marching here today. Our right to protest is fundamental and they'll gradually whittle it away until there's nothing left, and we'll have an authoritarian government. I really believe that."

Mohammed, a software developer, stated, "I've come because the situation in Gaza is horrific. People are now being starved to death. I've seen images of people who are just skin and bones. We've been saying this is going to happen for the last 22 months, but for some reason, Israel has still been allowed to continue with the slaughter and the massacres on a daily basis, with impunity.

"Our government in Australia has been supporting them. That's a great shame, it's not acceptable. Prime Minister Albanese's words of concern for the dying Palestinians are meaningless. He's saying one thing with his mouth and his hands are doing something different. It's very dodgy. I'm ashamed of Albanese as a prime minister. He has an obligation under international law to prevent a genocide from happening.

"There's no justification for continuing to support Israel. Albanese carried out this whole referendum on an Voice to parliament to recognise Aboriginal people. That seems very farcical. On the one hand, he claims to be helping oppressed Indigenous people, but on the other he is sending parts for

F-35 war planes dropping bombs on Indigenous people in Palestine.

“Then he lies about it, claiming that Australia is not sending weapons. They say they are only sending ‘non-lethal’ F-35 components, but that’s like saying sending a trigger of a gun is ‘non-lethal,’ as long as you don’t send bullets with it. The whole point of an F-35 is to be lethal.”

Mustafa, originally from Turkey, said, “We are here as a family. We must speak out and stop the genocide.”

Mustafa spoke on the role of the Turkish government of President Recep Erdo?an, who is “not doing enough at all.” Turkey was allowing oil to be shipped to Israel, Mustafa noted. “We don’t support it, but it is politics. Erdo?an speaks out for Palestine, in a way that he’s trying to stop in words. In action, it’s different.

“When it comes to politics, you cannot trust anyone. What I trust is all the people. We shouldn’t think that we are just a minority. If we altogether ask for peace, peace will happen. We should support peace, we should stop the war, as the whole humankind.”

Ali, a teacher, said: “I came to the protest because I feel like it’s an historical moment. Crossing the Harbour Bridge with thousands of people shows that a lot of people in Australia, especially in Sydney, care about Palestine.”

He condemned the victimisation of students who have participated in pro-Palestinian demonstrations. “I’m aware that students are being targeted, even expelled, for protesting against the genocide in Gaza. It’s very unfortunate that universities, despite their supposed commitment to freedom of expression, are refusing to defend students’ rights because of their ties to the Israeli state. They’re scared to stand up.”

Ali pointed to the role of capitalist interests in backing the genocide. “The Zionists pushing for an Israeli state have a lot of lobbying and financial power. Unfortunately, in a capitalist democracy, money talks. The US gains massive benefits from having a satellite state in the Middle East that furthers its own imperialist interests in the region.”

He also connected the war in Gaza to global developments. “The growing rivalry between the US and China is also relevant. China is expanding its economic influence through loan programs, and the US wants to maintain its control over energy resources. That’s why America is very much behind Israel, because it benefits the US.”

In Melbourne, **Anna**, a speech pathologist, said, “We need an embargo on weapons sales to Israel, stop Western and Australian governments’ complicity in the war crimes, and end this stoppage on all aid and food relief going to Palestinians.”

She spoke on the deliberate targeting of food aid centres. “It’s so inhumane. They’re shooting people who go into the

sea to get food there. They’re giving people a time limit on access to the food aid trucks that they do let in. There’s going to be a new death toll when the aid starts trickling in and kids who have been starved for months are now getting fed but without the proper nutrients. It’s just barbaric.”

“The fact that Western governments are backing this is capitalist in nature. These governments are prioritising sales and revenue when people’s lives are at stake. They’re supporting a genocidal state.”

When SEP campaigners said that a movement of the working class was needed to stop the genocide, she said: “I would agree. It’s hard as one person coming to rallies, it feels like you’re shouting into a void. The people who can actually do something about it aren’t listening to us. It does feel like we need an overhaul of the current systems in place in order to make any significant change.”

Naomi, a mediator, said, “The genocide is horrific. There aren’t words strong enough to describe the tragedy that’s going on.” She said, “There’s no way it’s antisemitic” to oppose the genocide. “I have nothing against Jewish people. This is Zionism. The ultimate aim of the Israeli government is to rid themselves of all Palestinians.”

“The Australian government has puppet strings tied to the United States. Donald Trump is not just a mad idiot but a dangerous one. The government here doesn’t seem to want to break away from that alliance.”

“As for the US, it’s ridiculous what’s happening. Those poor people there are facing dictatorship. It’s like boiling a frog, bit by bit. They’re attacking immigrants. People regardless of race care about what’s being done to immigrants and are speaking out.”

“Workers definitely must stop the shipping of weapons to Israel immediately. It’s revolting that Australia has ever done it.”



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