

New Zealand government “considering” recognition of Palestine, as it continues to back Gaza genocide

Tom Peters
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New Zealand’s right-wing coalition government announced last week that it is “considering” formally recognising the state of Palestine at next month’s United Nations General Assembly meeting.

The Australian, British, Canadian and French governments have already indicated that they are prepared to recognise Palestine as a state, in a cynical attempt to divert attention from their continued backing of the Israeli regime’s genocide in Gaza.

The National Party-led government in Wellington is similarly trying to deflect mass opposition to the genocide, even as it continues to provide diplomatic, political and military support for Israel and US imperialism.

In a statement on August 11, Foreign Minister Winston Peters, from the right-wing nationalist NZ First Party, said New Zealand had long supported a “two-state solution” and called for a “ceasefire and a political settlement to enable Israelis and Palestinians to live peacefully side-by-side.” He said the cabinet would make its decision in September after discussing whether a Palestinian state was “viable.”

The imperialist powers are well aware that UN recognition of a Palestinian state—which would be ruled by the Palestinian Authority, the hated puppet of Israel and US imperialism—will not stop the destruction of the Palestinian people.

Peters’ statement portrayed the NZ government as a distant, deeply concerned onlooker, wanting to bring an end to the “human catastrophe in Gaza.” Peters declared: “While we are a long way away from the Middle East, we will continue to ensure our voice is heard.”

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon similarly told a

media conference on August 14: “We are a long way away from this conflict, we have very limited connections to Israel in terms of trade ties or other things, but we stand up for values.”

The day before, Luxon had told reporters: “What’s happening in Gaza is utterly, utterly appalling. I think Netanyahu has gone way too far. I think he has lost the plot.”

This was a gentle scolding of the Israeli Prime Minister—a wanted war criminal whose regime has massacred tens of thousands of people, inflicted mass starvation on millions, and is seeking to ethnically cleanse the Gaza Strip.

Luxon and Peters’ attempt to portray their government as uninvolved in these crimes is a fraud. As a member of the US-led Five Eyes intelligence network, New Zealand’s spy agencies conduct surveillance around the world on behalf of US imperialism, which is a full partner in Israel’s genocide. The NZ government refused to condemn President Trump’s plan for a complete takeover of Gaza.

Several New Zealand Defence Force personnel are deployed in the Middle East, where they are embedded with US forces that are protecting supply lines for Israel and bombing targets in Yemen.

New Zealand capitalists are funding and profiting from the slaughter. The charity Mindful Money has calculated that funds which are part of the KiwiSaver retirement savings scheme—which most workers pay into—have invested \$900 million in the armaments industry. The value of weapons-related investments surged by 40.9 percent in the past year as companies cashed in on war and genocide.

The *Post* reported on August 14 that, according to Mindful Money, \$71.9 million “of KiwiSaver and retail fund money was invested in weapons companies whose wares were used in the Gaza war,” including Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, Boeing and Rheinmetall.

New Zealand-based funds had also invested \$179.9 million “in two non-weapons companies whose products were aiding the Israeli war effort.” These are Caterpillar, “which has supplied armoured D9 bulldozers used in Israel’s ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, accompanying combat troops and paving their way by clearing roads and demolishing buildings; and Amphenol, which makes components for military and aerospace systems.”

The government continues to lash out against even mild criticism of its pro-Israel stance. On Tuesday August 12, Speaker Gerry Brownlee barred opposition Green Party co-leader Chlöe Swarbrick from parliament for the rest of the week in retaliation for her speech calling for sanctions on Israel for war crimes.

In a blatant attack on free speech, Brownlee suspended Swarbrick after she refused to apologise for stating: “If we find six of 68 government MPs with a spine, we can stand on the right side of history.” Brownlee declared he would not tolerate the implication that government MPs were “spineless.”

The Greens and the Labour Party are seeking to ensure that the widespread anger among workers and youth over the genocide remains subordinated to the capitalist, parliamentary system.

At a protest in Auckland on August 16 called by the Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa, Swarbrick denounced the “system that is asking you to turn away from a genocide that is happening on the other side of the world.” Her only practical advice to the crowd, however, was to “do exactly what you are doing right now: turn up.” That is, keep attending protests to pressure the right-wing government to sanction Israel and recognise Palestinian statehood.

The reality is that no party in parliament represents a genuine opposition to imperialist war. The 2017-2023 Labour Party-led coalition government, which included the Greens, maintained diplomatic and political ties with Israel and deepened New Zealand’s alliance with the United States and NATO. Before it lost the October 2023 election, and for some time afterwards, Labour openly backed Israel’s onslaught against Gaza.

The Greens, for their part, supported the 2022 to send New Zealand troops to Britain to assist in training Ukrainian soldiers for the US-NATO proxy war against Russia. The party also argued for greater military spending to support New Zealand’s ability to intervene throughout the Pacific region.

The Labour Party and sections of the union bureaucracy have endorsed the current government’s plan to double military spending, as New Zealand is integrated more closely into US plans for war against China.

The destruction of Gaza and the mass murder of the Palestinian people are inseparable from the imperialist drive to dominate the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia—in fact, to re-colonize the entire world—at the expense of Russia and China. That is why the genocide will not be ended by creating a Palestinian state, whose population will remain entirely at the mercy of the Zionist regime and its imperialist backers.

The developing Third World War will only be stopped by mobilizing the working class against its source: the capitalist system. A consciously socialist movement against war and austerity must be built—including mass strikes to shut down the production and supply of weapons and the financing of war.

Such a movement can only be built in a political struggle against Labour and the Greens. It also requires a rebellion against the pro-capitalist union bureaucracies, which in every country have prevented strikes and other actions by workers that would disrupt weapons shipments to Israel.



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