

The political lessons of Netanyahu's fascistic tirades against Australian Prime Minister Albanese

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22 August 2025

Over recent days, Israeli Prime Minister and arch-war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu has intensified his attacks on the Australian Labor government and its Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, accusing them of having “betrayed Israel” and “abandoned” Jewish people.

The conflict has emerged as Israel's genocide enters a new and horrific stage. At least 260 people have died of starvation, and one in every three children in Gaza City are malnourished. Figures released by Israel of the Palestinian death toll up to May reveal that 83 percent of the dead are civilians.

Israel's deliberate starvation is one element of an operation to complete the ethnic cleansing plan outlined in May by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who declared, “Within a year, ... Gaza will be entirely destroyed, civilians will be sent to ... the south to a humanitarian zone ... and from there they will start to leave in great numbers to third countries.” Netanyahu is preparing a massive invasion of Gaza City to make that a reality.

A number of the European imperialist powers, together with Australia and Canada, are seeking to cover over their central role in this modern-day Holocaust. Albanese, for instance, has declared that Netanyahu is “in denial” about starvation, and has said there have been “too many innocent lives lost.”

Albanese has repeatedly hastened to assure Israel of his ongoing support for the Gaza offensive, however, declaring that Palestine must be “demilitarized” in order to create a “secure Israel.” He has primarily presented the situation in Gaza as a “humanitarian catastrophe,” as though the mass killing of more than 60,000 people was an unfortunate mistake.

Netanyahu's frothing response to even these highly limited criticisms exposes the fraud being peddled not only by the Australian government and the European powers, that occasional finger wagging and polite appeals to the Israeli government will halt the mass slaughter of Palestinians.

Those claims are a cynical attempt by the leaders of the major powers to cover their tracks, even as they continue to back Israel's onslaught.

The clashes followed Albanese's announcement last week that Australia would vote in favour of “recognising” a Palestinian state at the September meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

On Monday, Labor denied a visa to far-right Israeli parliamentarian Simcha Rothman, who has described Palestinian civilians, including children, as “enemies” and has called for the complete annexation of the West Bank.

Netanyahu responded on X: “History will remember Albanese for what he is: a weak politician who betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews.”

Even as Israeli politicians warned Netanyahu that he risks undermining relations with a steadfast ally, he has doubled down. In comments to the right-wing Australian “Sky News” channel yesterday, Netanyahu proclaimed that Albanese's “record is forever tarnished by the weakness that he showed in the face of these Hamas terrorist monsters.”

Albanese's response has underscored the absurd character of Netanyahu's claims. At a press conference, the Australian prime minister declared he does not “take these things personally,” reiterated his support for Israel's “right to defend itself” and presented the fascistic US administration of President Trump, the chief armer and backer of the genocide, as a potential peacemaker.

There are several factors motivating Netanyahu's decision to launch a public attack against a staunch supporter of his war crimes.

In the first instance, there is a direct correspondence between the Israeli leader's unhinged declarations and the scale of the crimes being committed by his regime. Netanyahu is dialing up the fascist rhetoric as he escalates the murderous onslaught on Gaza.

Netanyahu's frothing reaction to even vague professions of humanitarian “concern” is a warning of what he is

preparing to unleash with the invasion of Gaza City. A full-scale assault on the city, whose population has doubled during the genocide to an estimated 1 million, will produce horrors greater even than those of the past two years.

Secondly, it seems likely Netanyahu selected the Australian government, as an easy target, to send a message to the more powerful imperialist countries that have adopted a similar phony posture of “concern.” Australia, moreover, is completely integrated into the US military-intelligence apparatus, and Netanyahu knows that he has the backing of the individual who directs that apparatus, Donald Trump.

Thirdly, Netanyahu was directing his tirades not only or even primarily at the Labor government but at mass global public opinion. Earlier this month, 300,000 people marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, in one of the largest per capita protests against the genocide since it began.

Israeli leaders openly attacked the event and the failure of the Australian Labor authorities to prevent it, despite their attempts to obtain a court ban. Netanyahu has previously demanded a crackdown on protests in Australia, which the Labor government has repeatedly attempted, invoking dubious antisemitic incidents, the majority of which have later been exposed as false flags.

Finally, there is a sense in which Netanyahu has the measure of Albanese, and of all the imperialist leaders seeking to distance themselves from a genocide that they have and continue to support.

They are all fully aware that the recognition pledges are a charade. They are a promise to recognise a pile of rubble and corpses that will do nothing to prevent the ethnic cleansing of all Palestine. Albanese’s statements about Israel’s deliberate starvation of the Palestinians, while defending their mass murder through bombardment, have been as passive, vague and weak as possible.

At a press conference earlier this month, responding to an Australian journalist and only days after a phone call with Albanese, Netanyahu made the following assessment of the various statements of concern emanating from leaders in Paris, London, Berlin, Ottawa and Canada:

“Many of these leaders tell me in private conversations, ‘We agree with you. We understand what you’re doing. We would do the same.’ But they say, ‘We have to cater to public opinion at home.’ I tell them, ‘It’s your problem.’”

That accords fully with the actions of all the governments, including the Australian Labor administration. It continues a secretive arms trade with Israel, with the media last week revealing dozens of active military export permits. Australia supplies key parts for the F-35 fighter jets that have been used to decimate Gaza, and the US-Australian Pine Gap spy base almost certainly provides intelligence, including targeting information, to the Israelis.

Domestically, the Labor government and its state counterparts have sought to outlaw opposition to the genocide, including with the continuous conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, which they are increasingly enshrining in law.

The support of the Australian government and all the imperialist powers for the genocide is one component of their participation in an eruption of imperialist militarism globally. In Australia, that has included Labor’s transformation of the continent into a frontline state for a US-led war against China.

By backing the barbarism that is unfolding, whatever their occasional crocodile tears, the major powers have helped to normalise policies of mass murder that will be deployed on an even greater scale in the wars that they are preparing. And by viciously attacking mass hostility to the genocide, they have sought to create a precedent for outlawing all anti-war sentiment.

That sentiment has only deepened, but to go forward and to stop the genocide, it must be based on a new political perspective. The program that has predominated, of endlessly appealing to governments to change course and halt their support for the genocide, has abjectly failed. That line has been pushed by various Greens, pseudo-left and social democratic forces internationally, to politically neuter opposition and direct it behind the very political establishments responsible for the war crimes.

A new strategy is needed, based on the fight to mobilise the working class independently, including through strikes and industrial action to cripple the imperialist-Israeli war machine. That necessarily means a rebellion against the corporatised and pro-war trade union bureaucracies, which have blocked such action around the world.

This struggle must be part of the broader fight to build an international anti-war movement of the working class, based on a socialist, revolutionary and internationalist perspective, directed against all of the governments and the capitalist system that is spewing up all of the horrors of the 1930s.



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