Australian Labor government “recognises” a Palestine it is helping to ethnically cleanse

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22 September 2025

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese joined the leaders of the UK, Canada, France and several other European states in formally “recognising” a Palestinian state at a UN summit today.

As with those countries, Albanese is seeking to cover up his government’s ongoing complicity in the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza with a pledge that is the height of imperialist hypocrisy. He is “recognising” a state that does not and will not exist, as his Labor government aids an Israeli regime that is explicitly committed to the ethnic-cleansing of Gaza and ultimately of all of historic Palestine.

Like his counterparts, Albanese is desperately seeking to hose down and divert mass opposition to the genocide domestically.

As around the world, the genocide has been a central issue in Australia, which has a large Middle Eastern and Islamic population, and where significant layers of youth have been politicised by the horrors of the past two years.

Labor’s attempts to deny its involvement, moreover, have suffered a series of blows, including with revelations of ongoing military exports to the Zionist regime.

Albanese’s remarks at the UN were notable, not only for demonstrating the complete fraud of “recognition,” but also for legitimising the various imperialist and Israeli talking points used to justify the genocide that is underway.

He began with a paean to the establishment of the Zionist state. “In 1947, Australia was proud to be the first member of the United Nations to vote for the plan that made the modern state of Israel possible,” Albanese declared. As he has previously boasted, that took place under a Labor government, setting the pattern of Australia’s support for Israeli ethnic cleansing from its outset.

Albanese said nothing about the reality that Israel was founded through the mass displacement of Palestinians. The formation of a colonial state, based on Jewish racial domination, which he hailed, inevitably entailed the subjugation of the Palestinians and a relentless Israeli expansionism. Under conditions of an eruption of imperialist war globally, it has culminated in a 21st century Holocaust.

The 80 years of imperialist oppression of the Palestinians were vaguely presented as a series of missed “opportunities” and a “cycle of violence.”

Albanese dispensed with passive phrasing and deliberate ambiguity only when he came to October 7, 2023. The Palestinian military operation, which had the character of a desperate breakout from a Gaza that had been under siege for the previous 16 years, was a “horrific” act of irrational “terrorism” with no antecedent cause.

Albanese passionately demanded the release of the small number of remaining Israeli hostages. He declared that “we stand with Jewish people everywhere who feel the cold shadow of history’s darkest chapter in any act of antisemitism.”

That line, of conflating opposition to the imperialist-backed Israeli war crimes with anti-Jewish bigotry, has been used by Albanese and other imperialist leaders to slander and attack the mass opposition that exists.

When Albanese turned to the situation confronting the Palestinians, the passive voice returned. He depicted the situation in Gaza as a “humanitarian catastrophe.” “Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed,” he said, without saying who killed them.

In a speech already being depicted by Labor-aligned sections of the Australian press as courageous and bold, Albanese’s criticism of the Zionist regime began and

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ended with the phrase: “And the Israeli government must accept its share of responsibility.” The war in Gaza, he warned, as well as the expansion of Israeli settlements, “risks putting a two-state solution beyond reach.”

All of this is dripping with cynicism. Albanese knows full well what Israel is carrying out, because its leaders are explicit on their aims. They have openly declared that the current offensive against Gaza City is the prelude to the ethnic-cleansing of the entire Strip, in keeping with Trump’s plan to transform it into US-controlled “real estate.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly declared that “recognition” will change nothing and has said those world leaders proposing it are simply seeking to assuage domestic public opinion.

The only concrete measures Albanese proposed were directed against the Palestinians. Hamas would have to “surrender its weapons and end its rule in Gaza.” That is, the only entity fighting the Israeli invasion, under conditions of an open-declared plan for the annexation of the strip, would have to lay down its arms and face being imprisoned or murdered en masse.

The Palestinian Authority, a corrupt and pliant instrument of the US and Israel, would have to be made more so, Albanese declared. It would have to completely “demilitarise” and conduct “wholesale reforms” to all areas of governance.

The two-state solution is clearly dead, but even Albanese’s fantastic telling of it was a mockery of the principles of self-determination and sovereignty.

Labor’s real program is made clear by its continuation of military exports to Israel, including, as revealed by *Declassified Australia* in July, the ongoing supply of key parts without which the Zionist regime’s F-35 fighter jets could not fly and drop bombs on Palestinians.

The joint US-Australian Pine Gap spy base in central Australia is almost certainly providing targeting information to Israel for use against the Palestinians. That is one component of Australia’s ever-greater integration into the US military-intelligence apparatus that is the chief enabler of the genocide.

Albanese did not immediately follow other leaders in making the cynical pledge to “recognise” Palestine. He only shifted his position, after a protest early last month of up to 300,000 people across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in what was one of the largest pro-Palestinian rallies, per capita, anywhere in the world.

Data from the international conflict monitor ACLED, provided to SBS News this week, has shown that since the genocide began Australia has had more than 900 pro-Palestinian protests over the past two years.

SBS noted that “Australia ranks 9th globally for pro-Palestinian protests, and is 4th among non-Muslim majority countries.” For protests involving more than 10,000 people, the 33 that have been recorded in Australia puts it second only to Yemen.

That underscores widespread and growing anti-war sentiment, particularly among workers and young people. The Labor governments, led by Albanese, have responded with threats, intimidation and police mobilisations. In some states, such as New South Wales, the Labor administration has repeatedly sought to ban demonstrations, while enacting sweeping anti-protest laws.

That is one side of the attempt to hose down opposition. The other is the lies and obfuscations such as Labor’s recognition pledge.

Such lies have politically neutered the mass movement, notwithstanding its size, longevity and the sincere sentiments of participants. Leaders of the Greens, along with pseudo-left groups, have subordinated the opposition to impotent appeals to Labor to shift course, covering over the reality that the genocide is inseparable from a broader descent by imperialism into world war.

As the Socialist Equality Party has insisted, what is required are not moral pleas to the governments responsible, but an implacable fight against them, including through the mobilisation of workers in strikes and industrial action, in opposition to the corporatised and Labor-aligned union bureaucracies.

Such a struggle must form a component of the fight to build a socialist, revolutionary and international anti-war movement of the working class, directed against the source of the deepening barbarism, the capitalist system itself.

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