

New Zealand government whitewashes Israel's genocide in Gaza

Tom Peters**30 September 2025**

In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 26, New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters whitewashed Israel's genocide in Gaza and said his government would not join other countries in recognising Palestinian statehood.

As the WSWS explained, the "recognition" of Palestine by Australia, Canada, the UK and others is a fraud, aimed at covering up the fact that these imperialist powers have spent two years defending Israel's actions and providing it with material support to destroy the Gaza Strip and massacre its people.

New Zealand's right-wing coalition government opted against recognition, however, not because of its cynical and empty character, but in order to more demonstratively align itself with the Zionist regime and the Trump administration.

NZ's ruling class is strengthening its alliance with US imperialism, which is preparing for war against China, ramping up the US-NATO war against Russia and seeking to reimpose direct colonial rule in the Middle East. The Gaza genocide is one component of this global war for the redivision of the world.

Wellington still claims to want a "two state" solution for Israel/Palestine, but Peters told the UN that "recognising Palestine now will likely prove counterproductive" because Hamas would portray it as a "victory." Echoing Israel's pretext for its genocide—that Hamas must be destroyed—Peters said the group must "have no place in any future Palestinian state. They know only hate."

By contrast, Peters mildly criticised the Israeli military's actions as a "grossly disproportionate" response to Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023. In fact, Israel has systematically killed, maimed and starved hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed most structures in the Gaza Strip, with the aim of driving out

its population.

While calling for a "ceasefire" and for aid deliveries to stop the catastrophic famine, Peters did not mention that Israel had caused the famine with its illegal blockade. Earlier this year, he refused to condemn the criminal US-Israeli plan to ethnically cleanse and take over the Gaza Strip.

New Zealand's foreign minister made no reference to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who attended the UN despite being subject to an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court for war crimes. Earlier in the day, Netanyahu delivered a fascistic tirade to the General Assembly, in which he defended the mass murder of Palestinians and Israel's bombing and acts of terrorism in Yemen, Iran, Lebanon and Syria.

Israeli officials counted 77 delegations that either did not attend Netanyahu's speech or walked out during it. The list did not include New Zealand, the US, Britain, Australia or any of the European powers backing Israel.

New Zealand's Deputy Prime Minister David Seymour, from the far-right ACT Party, gloated to the *New Zealand Herald* that rejecting the recognition of Palestine was a "triumph for reason and logic over rule by emotion and rule by the mob." This was a reference to ongoing mass protests against the genocide, which ACT has repeatedly smeared as extremist and "antisemitic."

Speaking to Radio NZ on Monday, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon emphasised his government's "friendship" with Israel. He said there was "fault at both sides" for the situation in Gaza, adding, "we're not pro-Palestine, we're not pro-Israel, we're friends to both, but we are pro-peace."

The idea that one can be neutral on the relentless, one-sided slaughter and starvation being inflicted on Gaza

is ludicrous. The fact is that the National Party-led coalition government is firmly aligned with the Zionist regime.

This was recognised by Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Sharren Haskel, who applauded Peters' UN speech, writing on X, "Thank you @winstonpeters, very welcome to see some common sense and moral courage from our friends in New Zealand." She added that she was "Looking forward to visiting NZ soon!"

Conscious of the widespread public opposition to the Gaza genocide, Luxon stated in August: "We are a small country a long way away, with very limited trade with Israel. We have very little connection with the country."

In fact, New Zealand military personnel are actively supporting the US-Israeli operations by assisting in the bombing of Yemen's Houthi forces, in order to keep supply lines open for Israel.

New Zealand's imports from Israel have doubled since 2021, to an annual value of \$315.66 million in the year to March 2025, including medical and electronic goods. New Zealand retirement savings funds have invested tens of millions of dollars in weapons companies which are supplying the Israeli and US militaries.

The opposition Labour Party and its allies, the Greens and Te P?ti M?ori, denounced the government's position at the UN. Labour leader Chris Hipkins hypocritically said the government "is turning its back on Palestine, when we see an unfolding genocide there. I think New Zealanders were hoping that our government would take a principled position and recognise Palestine, as our friends in Australia, the UK and Canada have all done."

This is utterly hypocritical. Hipkins' Labour government supported Israel's assault on Gaza when it was still in office at the end of 2023. The governments hailed as "principled" models by Hipkins have all sought to suppress protests against the genocide, while sending weapons and providing diplomatic cover for Israel.

Keir Starmer's Labour government in Britain has branded the Palestine Action group a "terrorist" organisation, leading to the mass arrest of hundreds of peaceful protesters.

Protests are continuing internationally and in New Zealand against the genocide. But this movement

remains politically subordinated to capitalist parties and their pseudo-left supporters, which insist that nothing can be done except appealing to the same governments responsible for funding and supporting Israel to change their position, sanction the Netanyahu government and recognise Palestine.

The oppression and mass murder of the Palestinian people will not be ended through the creation of a separate state. Even if it could be established, such a state would only serve as a prison for the Palestinians and leave them at the mercy of the Zionist regime and the imperialist powers.

In response to the historic global economic crisis, the ruling class is plunging the Middle East and the entire world into war and genocide. The international working class must respond by taking up the fight for socialism, to end the capitalist profit system and its division of the world into rival nation states, which is the source of war.

As a critical part of this struggle, workers in every country, including New Zealand, must build rank-and-file committees—*independent* of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy—to organise a campaign of anti-war strikes and to force an end to the alliance with the US, stop all support for Israel and halt all military spending.



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