

Protests denounce New Zealand government's whitewashing of Israel's genocide

Tom Peters
5 October 2025

Thousands of people joined protests in New Zealand last week against the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the right-wing coalition government's whitewashing of the Netanyahu regime.

Demonstrations were held in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, as the two-year anniversary of Israel's criminal onslaught against the Gaza Strip approaches.

Protesters expressed outrage over Foreign Minister Winston Peters' speech to the United Nations General Assembly, in which he refused to recognise Palestine and did not condemn Israel's mass slaughter and starvation of hundreds of thousands of people.

The "recognition" announcements by countries such as the UK and Australia were a cynical fraud, made by governments seeking to cover up their ongoing material and political support for the genocide.

Peters' rejection of even this phoney step was intended to signal his government's lockstep alignment with US imperialism, which is responding to its historic economic crisis by violently carving up the Middle East, intensifying the NATO war against Russia over Ukraine, and accelerating preparations for war against China.

Peters issued a statement on September 30 hailing the "peace" plan announced by US President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and urging all parties to "implement the terms of the proposal fully." In fact, the agreement is designed to facilitate the ethnic cleansing of the Gaza Strip and to place it under a colonial-style administration in which Palestinians will be completely subjugated.

The NZ rallies last week also voiced solidarity with members of the Global Sumud Flotilla, who were

kidnapped by Israel and prevented from delivering aid to Gaza. Among the 500 people detained by Israeli forces are three New Zealand activists, Rana Hamida, Youssef Sammour and 18-year-old Samuel Leason.

In Dunedin on October 3, around 200 people protested at Port Otago where Minister Peters was attending the opening of an infrastructure project. In response, Peters defended Israel's criminal interception of the flotilla, telling the *New Zealand Herald*: "We told them not to go. They're not being abducted, they've not been kidnapped, they'll be put on a plane and sent home."

The next day, hundreds gathered at Aotea Square in Auckland, while in Wellington more than 3,000 people marched, despite torrential rain, from the Pukeahu National War Memorial Park to the waterfront.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with some of those attending the Wellington march.

Casper, a musician, said: "I've lost count of how many protests I've been going to. It's mad that it still falls on deaf ears." He was angry about the government's non-recognition of Palestine, "when almost every other government in the world is choosing to recognise a Palestinian state." He also denounced the government for refusing to stand up against Israel's interception of the Sumud flotilla.

Mike said Peters' UN speech was "totally embarrassing. It makes me ashamed to be a New Zealander." He described the US-backed "peace" plan as a "joke," adding: "You can't take anything Trump says seriously, especially when he's got [former UK Prime Minister] Tony Blair involved. Blair and the Middle East don't have a very good history."

Blair's Labour government played a major role in

justifying and supporting the illegal US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. He has been named as part of Trump's "Board of Peace" to govern Gaza.

Mila, who is from Italy, said that behind all governments' support for Israel were "economic interests. Most world leaders right now are not stopping the genocide, and they haven't [opposed the oppression of Palestinians] over the past 80 years, because they're making money."

She pointed out that many governments were "testing military equipment" on Palestinians, who had been "completely dehumanised."

Asked what needed to be done to stop the killing, Mila said workers around the world had to strike against weapons being sent to Israel, as many have done in Italy, but that such action had to be sustained and coordinated.

"It should be full scale, at the same time, for as long as it takes," she said. "We said 'never again,' that's what we were taught growing up, in school, learning about genocide, that we would not let this happen again. Now, it's in front of our eyes."

Ethan said the demonstration showed that people in New Zealand "don't agree with what our government is saying." He said he was disappointed with the "inaction by our government, refusing to acknowledge the state of Palestine," but noted that governments such as Britain, which recently recognised Palestine, were still "investing in Israel and providing weapons and money."

Speaking about the "peace" plan, Ethan said: "Everything to do with America and Israel and their claims of peace is something you have to take with a grain of salt. The things they're calling for in terms of Hamas [disarming and surrendering] are just a veil for them to continue their occupation and land settlements. Obviously we hope that peace can be achieved but it needs to be something where all parties can come out with land and safety and the promise that this kind of thing just will not happen."

The opposition parties are continuing their efforts to limit the protest movement to applying pressure to the government. The Wellington protest was addressed by Mayor Tory Whanau, a member of the Green Party, who called for sanctions on Israel and declared, "Use your voice, use your vote," encouraging those present to vote for a Labour Party-Greens government in a

year's time.

The main opposition Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins told Newstalk ZB on September 29 that there was an "unfolding genocide" in Gaza and the government should impose sanctions and "send a very clear message to Israel that this is not acceptable."

Hipkins added, however: "I absolutely defended Israel's right to defend itself" following the Hamas attack in October 2023, "and I continue to defend their right to defend themselves, but this is going way too far."

Hipkins was the prime minister in October and November 2023 and—like Labour governments in Australia and the the Labour Party in the UK—his government supported the genocidal assault against Gaza, fraudulently calling it "self-defence." He also smeared pro-Palestine protesters as antisemitic.

The popular anger over the Gaza genocide has not abated over the past two years. Yet the mass, worldwide protests have been unable to stop the Zionist regime in Israel and its imperialist backers from carrying out the worst atrocity of the 21st century.

The only way to stop the US-Israeli war machine is through the mobilisation of the international working class, including a campaign of strikes and other actions to shut down weapons production and shipments. This movement must be guided by a socialist program, linking the fight against the genocide and the developing world war with the struggle to end capitalism, which is the root cause of war and colonial oppression.



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