

# Protests across Australia oppose two years of the Israeli genocide in Gaza

Our reporters  
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Rallies were held across Australia on Sunday to mark two years of the imperialist-Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. The events, adding to hundreds of such protests that have been held over the past 24 months, again underscored the gulf between popular sentiment and the complicity of the Australian Labor government in the unprecedented war crimes.

Those who participated were defying stepped-up official threats and intimidation. The New South Wales Court of Appeal banned a planned march to the Sydney Opera House, based on spurious safety concerns raised by the state police and state Labor government.

The court went further than previous similar rulings, declaring that anybody who attempted to march to the Opera House could be found in contempt of court, the penalty for which can include indefinite imprisonment.

The judgement was made in the context of openly political attacks on the pro-Palestinian movement by leading politicians. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned plans to demonstrate on October 7, because it is the anniversary of the 2023 Palestinian military operation. Opposition leader Sussan Ley hysterically denounced the prospect of “activists” taking over the Opera House from “Australians.”

Beyond those attacks, participants were also signalling their rejection of the bogus claims that the so-called ceasefire brokered by US President Donald Trump marks an end to the conflict. In reality, the deal entrenches neo-colonial dominance over the Palestinians and paves the way for deepening Israeli assaults.

In Sydney, some 10,000 people turned out, marching an alternative route due to the court prohibition. There were similar numbers in Melbourne and around 2,000 in Brisbane, with smaller rallies held in other capital cities and regional centres.

Socialist Equality Party campaigners interviewed a number of participants, and explained the necessity to build a socialist movement of the working class against imperialist war, in opposition to the perspective of endless protests appealing to the Labor government, that have been promoted by organisers.

**Lucy** and **Elsie** are Year 10 students from a high school in Melbourne’s working-class southeast. They went to the rally while doing a school project in the city.

Lucy said, “We’ve only heard bits and bobs about the genocide, especially at our school it hasn’t come down that far. We’re not really well-educated about this, so we wanted to come and learn more, because the things we’ve heard are absolutely horrible.

Innocent people are dying. I’m only young, but it’s one of the most disgusting things in the world that I’ve been alive to see.”

Elsie said, “It’s been two years and no country has done anything really to stop this. You’d think, given how awful it is, someone would’ve stepped in to end it by now, but nobody has.”

On the Australian Labor government’s complicity in the genocide, Lucy said, “It’s horrible, because this is innocent people losing their lives, and kids. The whole place has been bombed, there’s nothing left. The humanity is not there. Their focus is on money and economics. The world today is all about money, but it should be more than that. And these people in Gaza are just trying to live their lives, but are being killed by these governments.”

**Paul**, a retired drug and alcohol youth worker, travelled three hours from a small country town to attend the protest. He rejected claims that the Trump plan would end the genocide, stating, “I think it’s very similar to all the other so-called peace deals that we’ve been seeing. Very short-lived and no intention to follow through from the Israeli side. I’ve got absolutely no faith in the people that have put it together, the Americans and all the others.”

Paul said that he voted for Labor in the last election, and said, “I’ve been kicking myself ever since because I don’t think there’s much difference between either side. I think both sides are in the pocket of the powers. And I really don’t think it matters who you vote for. I think we need to let them know that Australians are not okay with the slaughter of innocent Palestinians.

“That’s not who we are. And if our politicians can be so easily bought, then I don’t particularly want any of them. If we wait for our politicians to grow a conscience, it’s never going to change.”

**Kinga**, a hospitality worker from Scotland, attended the rally with friends from the UK. She said: “The genocide is absolutely horrific. It’s something I only educated myself on after October 7 two years ago. I wasn’t taught about it in school or have much historical knowledge beforehand. Then I started to engage more with Palestinian activists online and taught myself about it. We should be doing every little thing we can to show we’re against it.

“What our government in the UK is doing is really problematic: cracking down on our right to protest, the whole proscription of Palestine Action, that especially is a disgusting attack on free speech. I’m embarrassed because these Western governments don’t represent what their citizens think. As you can see, masses of people have been protesting for years, they still come out every week, and yet the governments continue to abet and fund the genocide. They just don’t seem to care about what we think.

Kinga said the Israeli attack earlier this month on the Sumud flotilla, “was unsurprising. Everyone on board expected that to happen. Greta Thunberg and other activists online said the attention shouldn’t be on them being detained and mistreated, they were trying to break the siege and shine light on what actual Palestinians are going through now.

“And if the Israeli authorities were doing that to Western activists coming in, you can only imagine what they’re doing to Palestinians. The Israeli government doesn’t care where you’re from, they tortured the two Jewish activists on board the flotilla the most actually. That’s an antisemitic act, especially when they claim to be doing the genocide in the name of all Jewish people.”

Kinga had followed recent actions by workers against the genocide in Europe, including a general strike in Italy, and industrial action by port workers in Greece who opposed weapons shipments to Israel. She said: “It’s amazing what workers did there. And the lack of mainstream media coverage of those strikes was really telling. That’s a scary thing for the establishment to have, over 2 million people in Italy on strike. We didn’t get that on BBC or Sky.

“But it just shows the power of the people. When they interviewed people in Italy whose lives were being held up because of the strike, they were happy because they supported the strike. There’s obviously a history of resistance to fascism in Italy. And then the dockworkers in Greece who were not going to load weapons to Israel—it’s so good to see that there are hopeful ways to stop this genocide. One can sometimes feel isolated and powerless, that we can’t do anything, and then you see all these workers come together to do something, and it’s inspiring.

“Everything is connected today. You might think that what’s happening in Gaza is just affecting the Palestinians, but the kinds of intelligence and technology that they’re testing on Palestinians are what’s going to be used elsewhere, including in Chicago now in the US. In such a globalised world, everything is your problem. What they’re testing in Gaza will potentially impact the quality of life and workers’ rights in other countries. The governments are seeing how far they can push and get away with things.”

**Daniel**, a young man currently looking for work, said, “I came today to catch up on the weekly rallies and share my support and solidarity. I think the genocide is horrendous and we as Melbourne should be doing what we can to support and show that we care and that we support resistance.

“I think it’s a very precarious ceasefire and I don’t think it holds up. I think it’s basically de facto null and void. I wish there would be a permanent agreement honestly, but it’s sad that it’s reached this extent. And I don’t think they [IDF] care about the well-being of the hostages.”

Asked about the ban on the protest at the Sydney Opera House, Daniel said, “I think it’s a curtailing of our rights to free expression and to rally in a safe manner. I don’t really see any reason why it would be banned on any state level.”

**Elisia** has two young children and is studying counselling. She had made her own placard.

Referring to her placard, she said “I just think a lot of the root cause of a lot of the issues we’re facing today comes from the

people at the top, which I think are the top bankers and the 1 percent wanting to just default back to wars and control and it has to do with money. And I think what’s happening over in Gaza is pretty much going to happen to the rest of us.

“I know the elites are out there building their bunkers so they’re going to be fine but the rest of us, you know, my kids, I’m not too sure.

“Another thing that gets me angry is when our prime minister and Penny Wong say we have to confront Iran [because of their nuclear program], who haven’t instigated a war since I don’t know when. But not for Israel who definitely have nukes and are currently attacking countries and instigating wars and problems all the time.

“Someone asked me, ‘why are you going to the protests today, there’s a peace deal’ and I just said, ‘it’s not a peace deal. Israel never abides by peace deals.’”

**Raha**, a law and sociology student from New Zealand, said: “The genocide is so shocking, and we have this unique opportunity where we can see it for ourselves online. No one can say they didn’t know it was occurring. I’m ashamed at the New Zealand government’s response to what Israel is doing. It’s so sick and vile.”

On the strikes in Italy and Greece: “The strikes were great. Unfortunately, it’s been difficult for workers and people on the left to show strong action like this, while the far right has no fear in coming out and doing what they want. I think on the left we’ve been a little too peaceful and complacent, so I agree that we need serious action like these strikes. And I would one hundred percent take part in something like that. This has been going on for two years now, it has to end.”



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