

# Australian governments discussing domestic military deployment after Bondi attack

Oscar Grenfell  
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At a press conference on Sunday, New South Wales (NSW) Labor Premier Chris Minns stated that discussions were underway about deploying the military domestically in the wake of the December 14 terrorist attack in Bondi.

That is one component of a feverish attempt by governments and the ruling elite to exploit the Bondi atrocity to vastly expand state powers and to crackdown on fundamental democratic rights.

Minns' comments were prompted by a question from a journalist. But his response made clear that he was not merely responding on the fly or proffering his own personal opinion. "We're in discussions about it," Minns stated, adding, "I'm not prepared to front run it because obviously that's a change for us."

The latter comment pointed to the veil of secrecy behind which unprecedented and authoritarian measures are being imposed.

A call out of the military would require the approval of the national authorities, indicating the involvement of the federal Labor government in the discussions referenced by Minns, and a greenlight from the governor-general, who as the British king's representative in Australia is the formal head of state.

Minns framed such a deployment as a bid to protect Jewish people in the wake of the attack. That is a lie.

The circumstances of the terrorist incident itself expose it. The attack was perpetrated by two Islamist gunmen, one of whom, Naveed Akram, had been on the radar of ASIO, the domestic spy agency, as a potential supporter of the Islamic State terrorist group in 2019. Despite that, the other attacker, his father Sajid Akram, was subsequently granted a gun license and legally assembled the arsenal used in the Bondi attack.

Governments are covering up the many questions as to how the two men could have planned, prepared and perpetrated their attack, without any intervention by the security agencies.

Instead, they are peddling the lie that the mass opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza is responsible for the attack and so must be repressed. That claim is based on the fraudulent conflation of Jewish people with the Zionist state, which represents an Israeli ruling class and functions as a bastion of imperialism in the Middle East.

It is also a denial of the character of the mass movement against the genocide itself, which has been peaceful, explicitly anti-racist and has involved many anti-Zionist Jews. The generally multi-racial, multi-religious and secular character of the protest movement is anathema to Islamists, whose world outlook is based on reactionary communalism, and there is not the slightest indication of a connection between the perpetrators and mass actions opposing the genocide.

Despite this, last week Minns urgently recalled the NSW parliament to pass extraordinary legislation, providing the NSW Police commissioner with the power to ban all protests after a terrorism designation has been issued. Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon immediately activated that dictatorial prerogative, barring public assemblies for a fortnight—a ban that could be extended.

The protest ban is going hand in hand with a rapid militarisation of state forces. The NSW Police, which over the past two years has repeatedly sought to bar demonstrations through court action, and has violently attacked peaceful protests, is to be equipped with more powerful weaponry.

Minns has declared there will be a massive police mobilisation on New Year's eve, involving high-powered weaponry. On Monday, he said "[I]t'll be confronting for members of the community to see police with big firearms and machine guns, which aren't normally the case on Sydney streets. But I don't make any apology for that."

Minns has also stated that his government is considering permitting the Community Security Group NSW (CSG

NSW) to carry firearms.

The CSG is a private body managed by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Its name notwithstanding, the Board of Deputies is not an impartial representative body, but a virulently pro-Israeli Zionist group.

CSG, despite receiving state and federal funding, is a secretive organisation. It is known that its officers participate in training in Israel.

In February, the *Guardian* revealed that an Australian army officer was being investigated by ASIO over potential loyalties to the Israeli state. In one interrogation, he described CSG's Israeli-based training as providing a "natural recruiting pool" for Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. Mossad is notorious for dirty tricks, including perpetrating a terrorist attack in September 2024 in Lebanon that claimed 43 lives.

The arming of such an organisation, far from defending safety, presents obvious dangers. It would set a broader precedent, moreover, for the development of state-sanctioned paramilitary squads, that would inevitably be directed against popular opposition.

Politically, the open discussions about arming the CSG expose as a fraud the claims of Minns and other government leaders to be seeking "social cohesion" and to "lower the temperature." Arming, or even considering arming, a Zionist-aligned security body has the character of a political provocation. Its obvious consequence and aim is to whip up communal and religious antagonisms, not to minimise them.

The announcement by the federal Labor government that it has invited Israeli President Isaac Herzog to visit the country is similarly provocative. Herzog is head of the Israeli state whose government has murdered at least 70,000 Palestinians in Gaza. Herzog's bloodthirsty statements feature in an International Court of Justice briefing of 2024, which found that his government has a "plausible" case to answer for the crime of genocide.

The suggestion by the Labor government that Herzog, implicated in some of the worst imperialist atrocities since the Holocaust, is a representative of Jewish people in Australia or should be accorded the right to exploit the Bondi massacre for his government's criminal aims is simply false. Labor's invitation is of a piece with its backing for the genocide over more than two years, political, diplomatically, and materially, including through ongoing military exports to Israel.

The governments are creating the conditions for an extraordinary scenario, in which the red carpet will be rolled out for an active war criminal, protests against him

may be banned entirely and the military could be on the streets.

Whether that all comes to pass or not, the governments are instituting unprecedented measures. While the immediate target is mass opposition to the genocide, a far broader precedent is being established for the suppression of working-class resistance, to austerity and particularly to war.

There have been longstanding moves to normalise the use of the military in civilian life. The most direct parallel is a sudden deployment of troops to the outskirts of Sydney by then NSW Labor Premier Neville Wran in the wake of the 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing. Amid the social upheavals of the 1970s, including enormous ferment in the working class, Wran warned that the bombing signalled a new age of terrorism and required unprecedented measures.

Members of the Ananda Marga sect were framed for the bombing, which many believe ASIO had a hand in perpetrating.

More recently, troops have repeatedly been deployed in bushfire and flood emergencies and when lockdowns were imposed in the initial phases of the COVID pandemic. The aim has been to legitimise the domestic deployment of troops. That has gone hand in hand with several pieces of legislation passed over recent years, expanding call-out powers.

The rush with which governments are instituting anti-democratic measures shows that the horrific Bondi attack is the pretext for longer-term plans. The moves towards authoritarianism, paralleling those of governments around the world amid a breakdown of global capitalism, can only be defeated by building a socialist movement of the working class directed against the entire political establishment.



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