

Australian regulator deepens attack on health workers opposing Gaza genocide

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In a further tightening of its censorship regime, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), in line with the federal Labor government's pro-Zionist agenda, has formally integrated the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism into its regulatory framework.

The move, announced on June 17 in a joint statement with Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism Jillian Segal, represents a direct attack on the fundamental democratic rights of medical professionals. It establishes a punitive apparatus designed to intimidate and silence doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers who dare to speak out against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza.

AHPRA's adoption of the IHRA definition as a "reference tool" follows a "formal policy directive" by federal and state health ministers in September 2025 requiring the agency to "improve" its response to all forms of racism and discrimination, explicitly including antisemitism.

The IHRA definition has been widely condemned internationally as an ideological weapon to shield the Israeli regime from criticism, by conflating opposition to Zionism and Israeli war crimes with antisemitism or the hatred of Jews. Among its core examples of alleged antisemitism are "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour" and "drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis."

Under AHPRA's new guidelines, any health worker who points out the indisputable historical reality—that Israel is involved in the systematic ethnic cleansing, starvation, and slaughter of the Palestinian people—can now be branded a racist and stripped of their license to practice.

This reactionary measure comes as the Israeli military, enabled and funded by US imperialism and its Western allies including Australia, carries out an unprecedented and ongoing campaign of destruction in Gaza.

For almost three years, the Zionist regime has waged a war of extermination. More than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed, including over 20,000 children. An independent UN commission confirmed last month that Israel is guilty of systemic war crimes, including wilful killing, torture, intentional attacks on civilians, and the deliberate targeting of

medical infrastructure.

In Gaza, healthcare has been subjected to a deliberate policy of "medicide." Hospitals have been bombed into rubble, doctors executed or abducted, and medical supplies blocked. Yet, under AHPRA's new regime, Australian medical professionals who denounce these atrocities risk immediate professional ruin.

The Albanese government from the outset has acted as a partner in the Israeli war on the Palestinian people. Labor has provided unconditional political and diplomatic cover to the Netanyahu regime while providing military assistance—including intelligence data from Pine Gap and the supply of vital components for F-35 fighter jets used to bomb Gaza.

The federal Labor government and its state counterparts have carried out a relentless campaign to suppress the widespread opposition and mass protests to the Israeli genocide.

Falsely claiming that the country was awash with antisemitism, it appointed Segal to a newly created post of Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in July 2024. A former president of the pro-Zionist Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Segal notoriously declared in November 2023: "The libel that any Israeli attack on Gazan hospitals from which Hamas operates would amount to war crimes only serves to demonise the state of Israel and its supporters."

Following the tragic December 2025 Bondi terrorist attack, federal and state Labor governments seized upon the incident to pass sweeping "hate group" legislation. This gives ministers extraordinary executive powers to outlaw political organisations and ban dissent on the pretext that political speech might cause members of a specific group to feel "threatened."

AHPRA's adoption of the IHRA definition is part of an ongoing campaign of intimidation by Zionist lobby groups. For almost three years, groups such as the Alliance Against Antisemitism in Health Care (AAAHHC) and the Australian Zionist Health Alliance have used AHPRA's anti-democratic complaints framework to threaten the livelihoods of doctors, nurses, psychologists, midwives, paramedics, pharmacists, and physiotherapists.

Those targeted were selected not for any failure in their

medical work, but for participating in pro-Palestine demonstrations, posting on social media—even in closed, private Facebook groups—and expressing solidarity with the estimated 1,700 health workers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza since October 7, 2023.

AHPRA’s investigative process strips accused health workers of basic rights. They endure exhausting demands for written responses, are banned from speaking publicly, and wait, in some cases for over 12 months, for the outcomes that threaten to end their careers.

At the same time, complainants remain anonymous and face no scrutiny or penalties for false claims. They can operate freely on social media, often publishing personal details and photos of practitioners’ families. AHPRA downplays the psychological toll on accused health workers and refuses to release details of its investigations and false allegations.

From the outset, the reaction of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), health unions, and medical colleges has been one of cowardice and capitulation. Closely tied to the Labor Party, they have consistently blocked any unified industrial action to defend members targeted by Zionist lobby groups.

A glaring example of this witch hunt is the ongoing persecution of eminent Sydney cardiologist and transplant pioneer Professor Peter MacDonald. Professor MacDonald became the target of a vicious campaign after raising a question at a Palestinian justice community forum last year as to whether Mossad may have been involved in alleged antisemitic incidents.

The AAHC falsely accused MacDonald of spreading “antisemitic conspiracy theories” and demanded his immediate suspension and termination from St Vincent’s Hospital and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. MacDonald was placed on forced leave for seven weeks and his name was removed from medical rosters.

Although an independent investigation ultimately dismissed the baseless complaints, Zionist elements forced the University of Melbourne to cancel a prestigious lecture by Professor MacDonald slated to be held this month.

Under AHPRA’s newly endorsed IHRA framework, false and vexatious allegations like those against Professor MacDonald will only increase.

Responding to AHPRA’s decision, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association did not condemn the move, but merely declared that anti-racism initiatives must be “implemented with care.”

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation issued a mild appeal asking AHPRA to suspend the IHRA definition, but then added that the board should establish a “transparent consultation process” to achieve its aims through other means. Such a consultation process would only legitimise the persecution of health workers.

The Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee (HWRFC)

has opposed AHPRA’s campaign of intimidation and punishment from the outset. It has passed resolutions, organised meetings, and provided a vehicle for health workers to collectively oppose the victimisation of their colleagues. It has insisted that the fight against AHPRA’s witch-hunting through appeals to the regulatory board, the trades union apparatus or Labor governments.

AHPRA’s decision is part of the turn by imperialist governments to authoritarian methods of rule amid what is an emerging world war. The escalating persecution of health workers speaking out against Israel’s mass murder in Gaza is a stark warning to the entire working class.

If the state can criminalise opposition to genocide, no democratic right is safe. Health workers—doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and researchers—must take matters into their own hands. Independent rank-and-file committees should be organised in every hospital, clinic, and research institute to turn back this attack.

- Demand the immediate, unconditional retraction of AHPRA’s adoption of the IHRA definition and the complete dismissal of all vexatious complaints against health practitioners.

- Defend all victimised workers, including Professor Peter MacDonald and the dozens of practitioners targeted by Zionist lobby groups.

- Assert the unconditional right of all medical professionals and workers to engage in political advocacy, oppose state violence, and expose imperialist war crimes without fear of professional retaliation.

- These demands must be directly connected to the independent mobilisation of health workers against Labor’s \$38 billion cost-cutting assault on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the wages and conditions of workers across all vital social sectors.

This struggle can only move forward if it is based on the understanding that opposition to the Gaza genocide is inseparable from opposition to the capitalist system that produces war, austerity, and the suppression of democratic rights. We urge health workers to contact the HWRFC to join this fight.



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