Australian government's phony posturing over Israeli murder of aid worker

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The Australian Labor government is once again engaging in a cynical exercise of handwringing over an atrocity by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), while continuing its full support for the Zionist regime and its murderous, ethnic-cleansing operation of Palestinians.

On Wednesday, the IDF exonerated itself over an April 1, 2024 drone strike that killed seven employees of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid group in Gaza, including Australian citizen Zomi Frankcom.

The IDF declared that it had concluded its investigation and that there was no "reasonable suspicion of criminal misconduct" by any of its forces involved in the attack. To add salt to the wound, the statement was issued on World Humanitarian Day.

That provocation was followed by another on Friday, with Israel's foreign ministry extending its condolences to the family members of the aid workers "who tragically lost their lives under deeply regrettable circumstances."

The IDF's suggestion that it had been targeting supposed Palestinian militants and that the strike on the WCK staff was an unfortunate error had always been a transparent fraud. The IDF carried out a bombardment of a clearly-marked WCK convoy. The aid organisation had provided its coordinates to the military in advance.

The strike was carried out under conditions where Israel was openly using starvation as a weapon of war against the Palestinians of Gaza, including by blockading most aid from entering the Strip. In that context, the strike, targeting a US-based charity with close ties to Western governments, would have been ordered at the top levels of the military command and by the government itself.

The Australian government has for the past two years pretended to be blind to the obviously deliberate character of the attack and its connection to the genocide.

The charade continued after the IDF findings were released. Foreign Minister Penny Wong declared: "This decision falls far short of the accountability we expect." The government would "not stop pressing Israel for justice for Zomi and her colleagues," Wong wrote, indicating she would seek an urgent meeting with its ambassador to Australia.

At the same time, Wong uncritically promoted an earlier version of the IDF's coverup, noting that it had previously ascribed the strike to "serious failures to follow IDF procedures, mistaken identification and errors in decision-making."

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese similarly bemoaned the no-fault report, while pathetically calling for "a far more transparent and clear explanation from the Israeli government."

On Friday, Australia joined with the UK and Canada, which also lost citizens in the WCK strike, with a statement declaring Israel's announcement "that it would not pursue criminal investigations into this strike, without further explanation, is shameful."

These statements are an utterly cynical attempt to divert public anger over Israel's flagrant criminality and to cover up the fact that the Zionist regime's actions are sponsored, facilitated and substantially overseen by the imperialist powers themselves.

In the case of the WCK attack, the Australian government has itself participated in and aided the Israeli coverup.

Amid popular outrage over the killing of Frankcom, the government in May 2024 initiated its own investigation. It was headed by the former chief of the defence force Mark Binskin, a figure completely tied to not only the Australian military-intelligence establishment but also the American war machine.

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The appointment of Binskin and the method of the investigation guaranteed from the beginning that it would be a whitewash. He visited Israel for just eight days in early May, and appears simply to have spoken with commanders of the IDF.

The farcical character of the investigation was underscored when the IDF declined to provide Binskin with the audio recording of its soldiers who launched the missile barrage—on the grounds that they had been conversing in Hebrew and so he would not understand what they were saying.

Binskin dutifully accepted that evasion, trundled back to Australia and issued a report declaring "it is my assessment that the IDF strike on the WCK aid workers was not knowingly or deliberately directed against the WCK." The government accepted that finding, despite the lack of any genuine investigation or evidence.

The statements of Wong and Albanese this week were largely a repeat of Binskin's finding, which was itself simply a repeat of the initial IDF coverup. To the extent that there is any actual difference between the Australian government and the Israeli regime now, it is that the Labor administration would have liked the IDF to sanction a few lowly personnel so there would be a foundation to claim that "justice" had been done for Frankcom and the other victims.

Aside from that, Labor has continued to fully back Israel throughout the almost three year long genocide. It has supported the Zionist regime politically, diplomatically and militarily, amid countless war crimes of a similar character to the attack on the WCK workers, from the bombardment of hospitals and schools, to the flattening of entire areas and the deliberate starvation of civilians.

A detailed report by *Declassified Australia* in October last year showed that the Labor government was continuing to ensure the dispatch of crucial parts for Israel's F-35 fighter jets. That article was based on leaks, because the government hides such exports behind a veil of secrecy while falsely claiming not to be a party to the genocide, which it describes as a "conflict."

In response to the terrorist atrocity targeting a Hannukah event at Sydney's Bondi Beach last December, the Labor government deepened its ties with Israel further. That included inviting Israeli President Isaac Herzog to visit the country. The red carpet was rolled out for Herzog, a central figure in the mass murder of Palestinians, whose government carried out the attack on the WCK staff, while protests against the visit were violently attacked.

Then, in February, Albanese was among the first world leaders to explicitly support the utterly criminal US-Israeli war against Iran. The Labor government has actively participated in the illegal war of aggression, including by deploying troops, air-to-air missiles and an advanced command warplane to the Middle East.

Labor's posturing over the murder of Frankcom is a fraud. It is complicit, not only in her killing, but in the vast imperialist war crimes of which the attack on the WCK convoy was only one example.

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