

Why is the Australian Government following the US on Israel?

With the news of around 100 Palestinians killed and 700 injured by the Israeli military while they tried to access lifesaving food in Gaza on 29 February, Australians, along with people all over the world, continue to express their outrage at the unbelievable inhumanity of the Israelis as they continue the slaughter of Gazans.

Palestinians in Gaza are facing 'plausible genocide' at the hands of the Israeli government, as the [International Court of Justice](#) has ruled. As of end of February, 2024, 1.9 million people – 85% of Palestinians in Gaza – have been displaced, 70% of Gaza homes have been destroyed, and around 30,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed. People are starving and medical care is virtually non-existent, with operations being conducted without anaesthesia. The misery is unimaginable.

The origins of the conflict go back decades before October 2023, to the establishment of Israel and the fleeing in terror, and displacement of around 750,000 Palestinians, in the 1948 war. Since that time, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have been subject to harsh apartheid conditions and in Gaza, they have been subject to a cruel blockade since 2007, effectively being kept in an open air prison.

Recently, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that he will not allow a Palestinian state, making clear again the decades long Israeli agenda – to take all the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, which encompasses the West Bank and Gaza, and to expel the Palestinians.

How has the Australian Government responded to this appalling situation? It has followed the US lead and refused to clearly condemn the Israeli Government's attacks in Gaza – the US is the biggest supporter of Israel, giving it billions in military aid each year. Both governments fail to express support for South Africa's case of genocide in the International Court of Justice and have frozen funding to the aid agency UNRWA, when Gazans desperately need more aid. Why is Australia taking this position?

The US government and its military has had undue influence in Australia ever since WW2 and the building of the spy base, Pine Gap, near Alice Springs. Meant to be a joint base, Australian Parliamentarians have to get permission to visit there. Most people working there are American and [Pine Gap is reportedly supplying information](#) on Gaza to the Israeli military. Undue US influence saw Australia join the illegal war on Iraq and the decades long war in Afghanistan – neither of which were in Australia's interests. Arms manufacturers hold huge sway in America – employing hundreds of thousands of people and influencing foreign policy. The United States' sway over Australia's government distorts our government's policy decisions – but they are not called to account for 'foreign influence'.

Now, with the AUKUS agreement, US influence in Australia is increasing further and the Australian Government is rushing ahead with militarisation, which entails loss of our sovereignty. It has allocated \$368 billion for nuclear powered submarines and is funding Lockheed Martin's long range missile production here. It has allowed the US military to use large swathes of the NT for their marines and expansion of airports and other facilities aimed at 'deterring China.' Both Labor and Liberal politicians perpetuate the myth that Australia needs the US nuclear umbrella to protect us. They follow the US lead in their disastrous war exploits and in supporting the Israeli government regardless of the war crimes they are committing daily in Gaza and the West Bank.

Write to Senator.Wong@aph.gov.au and the [Prime Minister here](#) and tell them Australia must:

- stop being complicit in genocide;
- call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza;
- reinstate and increase the funding for UNRWA;

- develop a more neutral or non-aligned foreign policy by, as a first step, cancelling the Force Posture Agreement with the US;
- condemn the Israeli government's decades long apartheid policies in the West Bank and Gaza; and
- put sanctions on Israel.

Ireland has just refused the US rights to fly over Ireland to deliver military equipment to Israel. Australia should cancel the \$900m contract it has just given to the Israeli military equipment and white phosphorous supplier Elbit Systems to supply the Australian army. We're helping to finance genocide! It must stop!

Kathryn Kelly

Convenor of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network, ACT branch.



Protest outside Pine Gap, January 2024.



Mural outside Newport railway station, Melbourne, organised by the Hobsonsby4Palestine group.



The Canberra Gaza support rally stops on Bunda St outside the Canberra Centre, 2 March 2024.