

# GAZA, ZIM SHIPS, THE FIGHT FOR PALESTINIAN LIBERATION AND END TO APARTHEID



## *A collective punishment: A Genocide*

Israel is committing a genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. For more than 6 months now, the Israeli army has killed more than 40,000 reported Palestinians, including over 13,000 children. Palestinians in Gaza are living in a state of forced famine, while enduring non-stop bombardment from the air, land and sea. 85% of the population in Gaza has been internally displaced. Over 70% of homes have been destroyed. Israel has cut off food, water, electricity and fuel to 2.3 million in Gaza. Israel has used white phosphorous on civilian populations and destroyed civilian infrastructure. These are war crimes: Genocidal rhetoric to “wipe out Gaza” and referring to Palestinians in Gaza as “human animals” is now commonplace inside mainstream Israel. In a press conference, the Israeli president Isaac Herzog declared that there are no innocent civilians in Gaza!

## *What does the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling mean for Australia?*

In response to a legal case filed by South Africa against Israel accusing them of the crime of genocide, the ICJ ruled on Friday 26th January to stop the massacres in Gaza, and to allow humanitarian aid through unencumbered. However, within 24 hours after this ruling, more than 500 civilians in Gaza were either injured or killed through the indiscriminate bombardment of residential areas, hospitals and UNRWA schools, where thousands of Palestinians are taking shelter.

Our Foreign Minister Penny Wong was photographed with Isaac Herzog, proclaiming Australia's unwavering support to Israel. According to the ICJ ruling, this may implicate the Australian government and its institutions. Apartheid Israel is not budging to the ICJ verdict, and therefore Australia must cut all ties to Israel, including military partnerships and economic ties, like the ZIM shipping line, just as it did for apartheid South Africa.

## *Not a war: Military occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid.*

The establishment of Israel in 1948 was built on massacres and mass expulsions of Palestinian people during an event referred to as “The Nakba”, meaning “catastrophe”. Being internationally recognised as the occupying power of the Gaza strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem, Israel has no right to “self-defence”, against the occupied people's resistance. Occupation is the source of all aggression. Palestinians, on the other hand, under international law have the right to resist the occupation with any means available. Just as oppressed people did in Apartheid South Africa, the Algerian battle for independence, or the Vietnam War. Gaza has been under military occupation since 1967, and in 2007 became an open-air prison after Israel implemented a blockade - effectively controlling Gaza's land, air and sea - placing Gazans under a strict calorie-based diet to ensure bare survival. Since the imposition of this siege, Gaza has undergone five major military operations prior to 2023, with over 5,400 Palestinians killed in 16 years.

## *Israel: “the only democracy in the Middle East” or an Apartheid regime?*

In truth, Israel was born out of the racist Zionist ideology, which does not lend to any two-state solution. Netanyahu (Israeli PM) has gone on record to say that he is proud to have quashed each attempt of Palestinian statehood. Furthermore, the increased settlement expansions since 1967 show that there has never been any legitimate regard for the two-state solution. It is a political solution which is disenfranchised from the true reality on the ground and has been for decades, and the phrase “I support a two state solution” has become a meaningless expression.

Although Palestinians Arabs make up 21% of the population inside of Israel, the Knesset in 2018 passed a law affirming Israel as the “nation-state of the Jewish people,” declaring that within that territory, the right of self-determination “is unique to the Jewish people,” and establishing “Jewish settlement” as a national value. **There are over 60 laws directly discriminating against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship compared to Jew Israeli citizens**, and the process of obtaining Israeli citizenship for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, or refugees abroad, is almost impossible. Israel has been accused of committing the crime of apartheid by numerous international organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, including prominent Israeli human rights organisations such as B'Tselem and Breaking the Silence.

## *Why BDS - Boycott campaigns*

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice and equality, initiated by Palestinian civil societies in 2004. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS aims to end international support for Israel by forcing companies, institutions and governments to change their policies, and by wielding political, economic, academic, and social pressure on Israel until it abides by its legal obligations towards the Palestinians under international law.

## *Is this union business?*

**Powerful unions are built on solidarity between workmates, between workplaces, across industries, and across borders. The economy is global - so is the working class.** There are Palestinians in our communities and in our workplaces who are directly impacted by the atrocities committed by the state of Israel against their families. **To fight injustice anywhere, we must stand against injustice everywhere.** Every act of military terror depends on workers, from building intelligence infrastructure to supplying front lines with uniforms, weaponry and supplies - none of this can happen without the labour of workers. In Australia, some unions are closely tied to the Labour Party and can put pressure on the Albanese government to cut ties with Israel, and even deal immediate and material blows to Israel's genocidal project through disruption of supply chains and boycott campaigns such as the ZIM campaign.

### **Can we actually make a difference?**

Throughout history, boycott campaigns, including by Australian workers, helped black South Africans win their battle against apartheid. The United States was forced to withdraw from Vietnam when protests and soldiers' mutinies reached boiling point. In Australia, there were weekday street marches, and in 1969 wharfies refused to load the Japarit taking munitions to Vietnam. In 2021 protests forced ZIM ships out of Oakland Port in the US and targeted ZIM ships from Livorino in Italy to Durban in South Africa. Some unions refused to load them.

Furthermore, RMIT university has recently ended its partnership with Elbit Systems, an Israeli weapons company, thanks to increasing pressure. Belgian airport workers are now refusing to load arms shipments to Israel.

Freedom for Palestine will require a movement of workers and ordinary people worldwide.



**Scan here to join the QLD Unionists for Palestine**



### **Why are protestors rallying in the Port of Brisbane against the ZIM shipping line?**

ZIM shipping has recently offered Israel all of its vessels, ships and infrastructure, to serve the "national needs of Israel" during its savage occupation on Gaza.

Founded in 1945, the Israeli shipping line Zim was instrumental in transferring Jewish migrants from Europe into Palestine during the Palestinian "Nakba", or the catastrophe.

From October 2011 to July 2014, ZIM was reported to have shipped 19,233 tons of military and security weaponry from US manufacturers to Israel. ZIM shipping is therefore a worthy boycott target as part of the Palestinian-led BDS campaigns against the state of Israel.



### **Campaigning against ZIM in Australia**

Since Israel began its genocidal war on Gaza, trade unionists and Palestine solidarity activists have stepped up a campaign demanding ZIM shipping is excluded from Australian ports.

Just announcing these protests throughout Australia has led to some delays which cost ZIM, as ZIM ships have tried to avoid being in port during protests.

Disgracefully, the NSW police attacked the November 21 protest, including arresting 23 people, including union members, using draconian anti-protest laws.

In Perth and Melbourne, there have been successful community assemblies. Because these assemblies have blocked the entrance to the Port, workers have not been able to safely enter the workplace. This health and safety issue meant that workers could not report for their shift, leading to a number of shifts being stopped with no financial loss for the workers.

### **Now it's Brisbane's turn.**

QLD Unionists for Palestine will be working with unions and the community to plan future protests and build pressure on the Port authorities and the state and federal governments to sanction Israel by excluding ZIM from our ports!



**Scan the QR code below to sign up to receive text messages for urgent ZIM ship actions**

