



The Workers' Weekly

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# Guardian

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

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# Stand with Gaza

M Santos

**Hundreds of thousands of people around Australia took to the streets on Sunday 3 August in support of the Palestinian people and to protest against Israel's crimes against humanity, including genocide.**

Organisers estimate 300,000 people marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge, an unstoppable force whose sheer numbers and power overwhelmed the attempt by the Minns government to shut down this great expression of solidarity.

Pro-Palestinian supporters from all walks of life, faiths and progressive organisations, as well as many concerned individuals marched in Gadigal/Sydney, Naarm/Melbourne, Boorloo/Perth and Tarntanya/Adelaide. They called on the Australian government to impose sanctions on Israel and bring to justice those in the Israeli government responsible for these atrocities.

Across the world massive protest actions are growing, with the march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge marking a historic turning point in the pro-Palestinian protests. This is not just historic because of the hundreds of thousands who braved the torrential rain but also because it was authorised by the NSW Supreme Court despite strong opposition from the pro-Israel Minns Labor government and the police who took organisers to court in a desperate attempt to prevent it.

The Court upheld the democratic rights of the people to march in support of Palestinians who are being starved to death and subjected to relentless killings.

Justice Belinda Rigg authorised the march, saying Josh Lees, an organiser from the Palestine Action Group, had "compellingly" explained the reasons why he believes there is an urgency for a response to the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

"The public interest in freedom of expression at this time, in the manner contemplated for the



reasons advanced, is very high," Justice Rigg said.

"The evidence indicates that whether the march is authorised or not authorised, the Sydney Harbour Bridge will be closed to vehicles tomorrow, or whenever the march occurs, as will roads otherwise surrounding the proposed route."

She also countered the police case saying that making a prohibition order would not make the march (which was going ahead regardless) any safer.

In Melbourne a march was called in solidarity with the Sydney march. Organisers estimate 25,000 people marched through the CBD to King Street Bridge. Their plans to cross the bridge were thwarted by police, including heavily armed members of the riot squad, who blocked the entrance.

## UN CONFERENCE

The High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution took place in New York from 28-30 July. The United States and Israel did not participate.

The Conference, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, called on all UN Member States to support a declaration urging collective action to end the war in Gaza and to achieve a just, peaceful and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In his opening remarks UN Secretary-General Guterres stressed that the two-state solution is the only viable path to ending the conflict and achieving lasting peace in the region, warning that there is no alternative.

"A one-State reality where Palestinians are denied equal rights and forced to live under perpetual occupation and inequality? A one-State reality where Palestinians are expelled from their land? That is not peace. That is not justice. And that is not acceptable," he said.

"This conflict cannot be managed. It must be resolved," Guterres concluded. "We must act before it is too late."

Co-chair Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Faisal bin Farhan al Saud, emphasised the suffering of thousands of civilians in Gaza under bombardment, while Israeli settlements expand in Jerusalem

and the West Bank to alter the region's demographic nature.

"Peace and security do not take place through deprivation of rights or force," he said, underscoring the need for a genuine and irreversible peace process.

"It is with the hand of history on our shoulders that His Majesty's (Saudi) Government therefore intends to recognise the State of Palestine when the UN General Assembly gathers in September here in New York," he declared.

"We will do this unless the Israeli government acts to end the appalling situation in Gaza, ends its military campaign and commits to a long-term sustainable peace based on a two-State solution."

## TURNING POINT

The Jewish Council of Australia (JCA) supported the march describing it as a "mass call to save Gaza."

"The tens of thousands of people who will march across the Harbour Bridge are crying out for moral leadership," the Council's executive officer Sarah Schwartz said.

"It is a time for all of us, including those in positions of power, to

do everything they can to halt an act of genocide and stand with the people of Gaza."

## MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM

It is now vital that the pressure on the Albanese and Israeli governments is maintained. This can be done through letters to politicians, letters to the print media, getting onto talkback programs, and use of social media.

Write now to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Foreign Minister Penny Wong, Defence Minister (aka minister for war) Richard Marles.

### Demand:

- Sanctions on Israel and its leaders
- An end to all trade, including arms trade with Israel
- Expulsion of Israeli diplomats and withdrawal of Australian diplomats from Israel
- Actively support the charges in international courts against the Israeli government
- Recognition of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine NOW.

# "This conflict cannot be managed. It must be resolved"

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MUA Solidarity with Palestinians

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# Guardian

Issue 2157

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## China and India

The establishment of the People's Republic of China and the ending of colonial regimes in Asia (and elsewhere) began the fundamental, qualitative change that has already resulted in the emergence of Asian countries as economic and political powers that are steadily replacing the domination of the imperialist powers of Europe and the USA.

China and India are powering ahead at a rate of 6-10 per cent GDP growth each year. This rate is well in excess of the sluggish economic growth of the industrially developed countries. They are being rapidly overtaken. This fundamental and irreversible development is behind the rising tide of anti-Chinese propaganda that has been flowing from wide sections of the Australian media and from the major parties, Labor and the Coalition.

Rather than welcoming the rapid rise in the standard of living of millions of impoverished people, there are those whose colonial mindset leads them to regard these developments as a threat to be opposed and defeated. Politicians from both major parties are beating up a scare campaign against China and India, the latter because of its independent path away from the control and domination of the US and its allies.

China's largest trading partner is the US, with China's trade with India coming second. China has replaced the US as Australia's largest trading partner. These are developments of enormous long-term significance. US military expenditure far exceeds that of China; it is the US that has military and naval forces spread out around the world including off the coast of China.

China is criticised for its growing influence in trade around the world. This comes from those whose mantra is "free trade." But when "free trade" works to their disadvantage they, re-impose quotas and other forms of trade restrictions, as the US and the European Union have done.

"Free trade" is actually a mirage given the many economic inequalities that exist between countries. The only realistic and fair-trade policy is one based on mutual benefit incorporated in trade agreements between countries. This is China's position.

Another point of attack is the cloud of criticism and tensions around the legitimate right of China to reincorporate Taiwan as a province of the People's Republic of China, a claim accepted by almost every country in the world including Australia and the US. However, the US has attempted by every possible means to prevent this from happening, including a threat of naval and military intervention.

Although some in capitalist countries are attempting to whip up an aggressive and confrontationist attitude to China, it is much less likely now that the world will be once again divided as it was during the confrontation between the socialist bloc and the imperialist camp in the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

Firstly, China's economy is integrated with that of the rest of the world to a much greater extent than that of the Soviet Union ever was. Furthermore, China's economic strength has already surpassed that of the former Soviet Union and East European socialist countries.

Secondly, China and all other Asian countries are committed to the principle of settling disputes between nations by negotiations, not by confrontation and war. This is what the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation – signed in 1976 by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – is all about. It states that member countries are "conscious of the existing ties of history, geography and culture which have bound their peoples together."

Furthermore, the basic objective of every socialist state is a world at peace, with resources that would otherwise be wasted on destructive wars being used for the benefit of the peoples of every country.

A third major factor is the strength of the worldwide peace movement and a new rise in the progressive and revolutionary movement in a number of countries. This can be seen today in the rising tide around the world of people's solidarity with the Palestinians and against the war machine that is the military arm of US imperialism in the Middle-East, Israel.



## Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day marked in Sydney

Denis Doherty

**On 2 August a reasonable crowd gathered at the annual march and rally to commemorate those who perished in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945. The emphasis of the rally was of course on the need to ban nuclear weapons, but we could not ignore the present carnage going on in Gaza.**

Haddad, a Lebanese author, stressed some of the tragic correlations between the two wars. While Gem Romuld of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) gave a rousing speech on the necessity for Australia to sign the UN Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW).

Peter Murphy reminded us that Australian First Nations people suffered with nuclear weapons at Maralinga.

Narauiki Cann was the MC for the event and spoke eloquently once we arrived at the Defence Department after a short walk. He was born in Hiroshima but spent his childhood in Australia.

The CPA has had a big role in continuing the Hiroshima/Nagasaki events and this year was no different, with a good contingent present to work with others for a world that is nuclear-weapons free.

This year is the 80th year since the bombing of the two Japanese cities. Last year the Hibakusha (the survivors of the atomic bombs) won a Nobel peace prize for their work in campaigning for a ban on nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, the world is now estimated to be 89 seconds from midnight and the clock has been turned further forward to the disaster zone with the foolish behaviour of US president Trump in moving nuclear submarines closer to Russia. 🇺🇸

## Congress Appeal

**From 27 February to 1 March 2026, elected delegates representing Communist Party organisations from all over Australia will gather in Melbourne for the 15th National Congress of the Party. There will be an opening on the Friday night, 27 February, to which all *Guardian* readers, their families and friends are invited. (Details will be provided in a future issue of the *Guardian*.)**

Over three days, delegates will discuss the work of the Party, make any amendments to and adopt a Political Resolution. In the lead-up to the Congress, Party members are discussing and submitting

amendments to the draft Political Resolution. In January 2026 the Central Committee will consider these amendments and finalise the draft to be put to Congress.

Congress will elect a new Central Committee to lead the work of the Party until the next National Congress. As the highest body of the Party, it can also amend the Party's Program and Constitution and adopt other resolutions as its delegates may determine.

The CPA has launched a Special Appeal to help defray the costs associated with holding a National Congress. These are considerable with delegates coming from as far away as Perth, the printing of documents, etc.

We are appealing to Party members, organisations, and all friends and supporters of the Party, including *Guardian* readers, to help us reach our \$10,000 target as soon as possible.

To contribute, please fill in the form below or write your details on a separate piece of paper to send with your contribution. Payment by credit card can also be phoned in on 02 9699 8844 or use the direct credit details.

All contributions will be acknowledged in the *Guardian*, with the names of contributors unless otherwise requested. We look forward to your support for this important occasion. 🇺🇸

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### 15th CPA Congress \$10,000 Financial Appeal

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Send to 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010 or phone through on 02 9699 8844.



# Marching in solidarity with Palestine

## PERTH

On 2 August, Perth once again met at Forrest place to stand in solidarity with the international Palestinian movement and pressure the Australian government to act against the Israeli genocide.

Although the morning had been persistently drenched by hard rains, people made their way to the city in spite of it.

When the rally began the rain had almost entirely cleared and the 100+ protesters started the call for a free Palestine. There were cheers of support as it was revealed that the NSW Supreme court had ruled in favour of the activists, confirming that the police prohibition order was declined and that the Sydney Harbour Bridge march would be going ahead the following day.

The protest had speakers from the union movement, local academics, the Palestinian community, and Jews for Palestine, each one repeating the call to action for people disgusted by the blind eye of our government as well as governments around the world to the atrocities being carried out against the Palestinian people.

Several Party members raised the flag and their CPA umbrellas in the crowd as well as on the march through the streets, joining in the calls to stop the occupation and for the Australian government to stop their support for this genocidal regime and continuing our demand to recognise a free and independent Palestinian state.

Speakers included a representative from the Electrical Trades Union.

This month marks 22 months of Israel's indiscriminate destruction of Gaza. International pressure has been

mounting on governments who have desperately tried to ignore and create cover for Netanyahu and the right-wing extremists in the Israeli government.

The move for change is too little too late, but the suffering in Gaza must end, protests like this one must continue across the globe. Big or small, the voices of the movement are strong and will continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Lexi Goff, WA Branch

## ADELAIDE

On Sunday 24 July, Free Palestine supporters gathered at Peace Park in North Adelaide.

Several speakers addressed an outstandingly large crowd. Speakers included representatives from the Australian Friends of Palestine Association, Islamic Council, Students for Palestine, Unions for Palestine, and several others.

Unions for Palestine spoke to the need for trade unions to take a more decisive role in this struggle, giving as an example the Anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa. He urged people present to join their union and place pressure on the leadership. To take immediate action to end any complicity in Genocide, i.e. End trade with Israel and its backers.

Some statements from speakers included:

- "The Liberal Party has sold its sole to the Zionists."
- "Labor is guilty of cowardice."

The Greens have been the only parliamentary party with a consistently supportive voice of conscience throughout.

The marchers then proceeded peacefully to Parliament House. 🇵🇸



Boorloo/Perth



Tarntanya/Adelaide

## UK's intention to recognise Palestine welcomed

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine welcomes the announcement by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom's intention to recognise the State of Palestine this coming September – a commitment he reaffirmed during a phone call with the President of the State of Palestine, His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas.**

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry

considers this a courageous step that places the UK on the right side of history.

The Ministry also appreciates the UK's position on the appalling situation of the Palestinian people, especially in the besieged Gaza Strip, and its support for enabling the State of Palestine to exercise its political and legal authority over the entirety of the occupied Palestinian territories (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem), as a pathway toward achieving peace

in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Ministry renews its call on all countries that have not yet recognised the State of Palestine to take this overdue step without further delay, in order to safeguard the two-state solution and as an important step in confronting the crimes of genocide, forced displacement, deliberate mass starvation, and annexation being committed against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West

Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The General Delegation of Palestine in Canberra calls upon the governments of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to immediately join this global moral momentum and recognize the State of Palestine in alignment with international law and international legitimacy.

The General Delegation of Palestine in Canberra

29 July 2025 🇵🇸

## Jewish Council backs march across Sydney Harbour Bridge

**The people of Gaza are experiencing an escalating genocide. Israel, emboldened by its allies, is subjecting two million Palestinians to a campaign of deliberate starvation, mass slaughter and planned ethnic cleansing.**

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, said that even if Israel's bombing of Gaza ended tomorrow, the effects of hunger will be felt for "generations." "Not only will children be stunted in their mental and physical development, and not only will adults carry the impact of starvation their whole lives," he said. "There will be social trauma felt by the Palestinian

people in Gaza and beyond that will last for generations."

This makes the call for international action to end the Gaza genocide more urgent than ever. Israel must face sanctions for its actions.

Sarah Schwartz, Executive Officer, Jewish Council of Australia (JCA), said: "The tens of thousands of people who will march across the Harbour Bridge tomorrow are crying out for moral leadership. It is a time for all of us, including those in positions of power, to do everything they can to halt an active genocide and stand with the people of Gaza."

"Palestinians in Gaza are being

deliberately starved to death. Penny Wong's stern words to the Israeli ambassador and statements of condemnation will not stop Israel's plan to eliminate the people of Gaza."

Dr Max Kaiser, Executive Officer of the JCA said: "Australia must join global efforts by sanctioning Israel and supporting the urgent flooding of Gaza with aid from the UN and international organisations who are standing ready."

"We stand with – and join – those marching across the bridge and call for immediate action to stop the Gaza genocide and for a future where everyone is free, from the river to the sea." 🇵🇸



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# PM rebuffed for insipid attitude to Gaza crisis

Denis Doherty

Despite the combined opposition by the ALP governments federally and in NSW to act against Israel for its cruel, indecently violent actions against the people of Gaza, the people of Sydney responded magnificently, turning out in a huge crowd to march across the bridge – ‘The March for Humanity.’ The police have estimated that the crowd was 100,000, while others have claimed it was as high as 300,000. The only demonstration that has come close to this one was the one just prior to the Iraq war of 2003.

We approached the start point of the rally at Lang Park near Wynyard an hour prior to the start of the march. Already York St footpaths were full all the way back to Wynyard Park, eventually York St was closed to traffic, and immediately filled up with protesters.

We moved slowly down towards the start position of march, all the time we were drenched by frequent and heavy rainfall. By 1pm, the start time for the rally, we were near Lang Park, but the people kept coming. There were people with prams and multiple small children, more elderly people with some on walking frames, there was one on a special scooter for a person with one leg. We stood there in the rain and waited while the crush got increasingly intense.

After a while I decided to withdraw from the march as I was not sure that I could make the duration of the march without needing special assistance. I made my way slowly down to George St and hoped to enter the Wynyard rail station, but the station was full, and so I moved onto Martin Place. As I walked along George St towards Martin Place, people were moving in the other direction towards the bridge, and each side street leading to York St was packed.

The crowd was so big that it was difficult for organisations to stand out, but there was a good turn out by the political groups. The ALP turned up with some MPs defying the Premier to mark their support for Palestine. Some yelled at them, “about time!”

Amnesty International had a good turnout, as did a few other groups, the only union that I noticed was the NSW Teachers Federation. However, the great bulk of the protesters were apparently unaligned, with large contingents from both Arab and Anglo communities.

## MESSAGES TO THE PM AND THE ALP

The ABC Insider program suggested that PM Albanese was having frequent conversations with the people to bring the community with him. The protest deflates this outrageous spin and states clearly; the great bulk of the people consider his approach to be insipid and subservient to the US and its commands.

The need to sanction Israel couldn't be more obvious, and a giant banner saying just that,



Looking up Margaret Street as crowds are packed in waiting to enter York Street so they can walk on the bridge.

‘SANCTION ISRAEL’, was held by the protesters as they marched across the bridge. Signs through the march of various quality, from amateur to professional, called on the government to recognise the cruelty of Israel.

Signs expressed anger and grief at the sight of people starving, dead infants, and the murders of essential workers such as journalists, doctors, and nurses. The overwhelming horror was captured on placards of all kinds. One of the organisers described it as “a beautiful, inspiring outpouring of humanity.”

## NSW GOVERNMENT OBSTRUCTION

The NSW Minns government has gone out of its way to show complete support for the Zionist cause since 7 October, 2023. Chris Minns, as soon as the Bridge protest was mentioned, immediately and angrily complained that it was intolerable and that traffic chaos would be caused. It was only at the last minute that the Supreme Court agreed for the march to go ahead, just 24 hours before the march.

The party has been campaigning for the Minns government to ban Israeli arms companies from attending the arms bazaar for maritime weapons, the ‘Indo Pacific Expo.’

The NSW government response is “International events such as this Expo serve to showcase NSW businesses on the global stage and position the state to realise the challenge of creating highly skilled local jobs.” We have responded to them; “we talk about human rights and international law, while you talk about commercial opportunities!”. This is a pathetic response from a government meant to represent NSW citizens.

The size and strength of this rally on 3 August 2025 should compel the ALP to end its insipid inaction and move to both sanction Israel and recognise Palestine as a state.

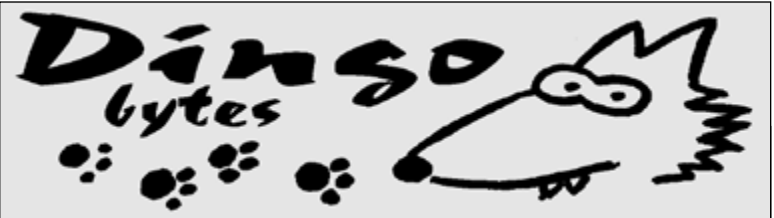
## THE MARCH DID OVERWHELM

The march was attended in such big numbers that the transport system was overwhelmed, and the police had to turn the protesters around and make them walk back the way they came. There were dangers of crush, and the police are blaming the protesters, while covering up their lack of organisation due to an unexpectedly large attendance.

Mainstream media is playing down this effort concentrating on the problems caused by the large number of protesters, and not mentioning the need to sanction Israel. The media has played a video of a hostage who was released the same day, and they have given more attention to that one Israeli person stating that they are giving to the bold message the people of Sydney were sending – “Sanction Israel.”

The message to the Australian government is clear; do more to stop the horror being perpetrated by Israel. There is no ducking and weaving left, the Australian government must sanction Israel in the numerous forms available. The NSW government must stop being a mouthpiece for Zionist propaganda and impose sanctions on Israel and Israeli arms companies active in NSW. The time for the weaponisation of anti-Semitism to victimise University students must end.

There were large solidarity protests in Melbourne and Adelaide which were also attended in record numbers. 🌟



**NAZI to NATO.** The following is a list of members of Hitler's Nazi regime who went on to become prominent in NATO, imperialism's nuclear military spearhead: Adolf Heusinger, Hitler's chief of staff became chairman of the NATO Military Committee 1961-64; Hans Speidel, Nazi Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's chief of staff, became Commander in Chief of NATO forces in Central Europe 1957-63; Johannes Steinhoff, Luftwaffe pilot became Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, 1971-74; Johann von Kielmansegg, General Staff Officer of Nazi Wehrmacht's High Command became NATO Commander of Allied Forces Central Europe, 1966-68; Ernst Ferber, Lieutenant Colonel of the Nazi Wehrmacht General Staff became Commander in Chief of NATO forces in Central Europe, 1973-75; Karl Schnell, First General Staff Officer of 76th Panzer Corps became Commander in Chief of NATO Central Europe, 1975-77; Franz-Joseph Schulze, Senior Lieutenant of the Nazi Luftwaffe became Commander in Chief of NATO forces in Central Europe, 1977-79; Ferdinand von Senger und Etterlin, Adjutant to the Nazi Wehrmacht High Command became Commander in Chief of NATO forces in Central Europe, 1979-83 – *The Beacon*.

Following on from the above, Palestine needs us to scrap the AUKUS war machine and challenge US imperialism. That's what supporting Palestine and opposing war means. The US spy base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs is supplying the Israeli military with targeting information for use in its war against Palestinians in Gaza. Israel's National Signals Unit has an agreement with the US National Security Agency and Pine Gap is the key platform for its impact. At the same time, instead of reviving a diversified manufacturing base, since 2018, successive Australian governments have sought to make Australia one of the top 10 global arms exporters. As a result arms manufacturing here has continued to increase as more companies have jumped onboard the AUKUS gravy train.

**PARASITE(S) OF THE WEEK:** are the governments trying to shut down protests for Palestine. An estimated 300,000 people have walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in rainy weather as part of a pro-Palestinian protest with actions taking place in other states. The bridge reopened at 5pm after being closed since to traffic since late morning. Meanwhile, in Britain supporters gathered outside the Westminster Magistrates' Court as Palestine protest organisers pleaded not guilty to charges, highlighting that they are “the accusers, not the accused.”

Stop the War Coalition chairman Alex Kenny and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament general secretary Sophie Bolt are accused of failing to comply with conditions imposed by the Metropolitan Police on a demonstration held on Whitehall on 18 January.

The police previously claimed that some protesters had attempted to breach the conditions by marching out of the agreed protest area.

Both campaigners confirmed their identities and entered not guilty pleas.

Speaking outside the court, Kenny quoted the Scottish socialist John Maclean, telling the crowd: “We stand here today as the accuser, not the accused, and we should always bear that in mind. We're accusing the state of complicity in a genocide, and we don't accept any wrongdoing or guilt on our part.” He warned of a growing crackdown on protest rights, saying that there is a “concerted effort to squeeze our ability to speak up about Palestine.”

“We know that this is happening because we've built a mass movement that, despite the smears, lies and intimidation, will not be silenced and is not going away,” he said. “We are the voice of majority opinion in this country, and history will prove us right and our politicians wrong.”



# MEAA statement

## School of Music targeted

**Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) members are deeply concerned by the planned closure of the School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU) and elimination of specialised programs in musicology, performance, and composition. We stand in solidarity with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the ANU's wider staff and student community in opposing the broader change processes at ANU involving cuts to arts and humanities departments across the university.**

The proposed restructure, ending the stand-alone School of Music, would be an immense loss to music in Australia. Since 1965 the School of Music has realised the vision of high-quality music education underpinning the cultural life of the nation's capital. For generations its graduates have lit up stages, live venues, and concert halls in Australia and around the world and continue to inspire and enrich future generations of Australians through their leadership in music education.

This proposal represents short-term thinking that fundamentally misunderstands both the value of specialised music education and the collective power of the music community to defend it.

### IRREPLACEABLE

Music education requires intensive, specialised training that cannot be replicated in generalist programs. Performance studies demand years of dedicated practice under expert guidance, while musicology requires deep scholarly engagement with musical history, theory, and cultural context.

Composition training involves mastering complex technical skills alongside creative development. Separate but interconnected, these disciplines have distinct methodologies, pedagogical approaches, and professional standards.

Whilst acknowledging that multiple pedagogical approaches can contribute to music education, any genuine consideration of alternative training models must emerge from actual discussion with staff and students based on desired learning outcomes, not imposed through administrative decree driven by financial expedience.

The elimination of the proven one-to-one teaching model, a cornerstone of musical training across

centuries and cultures, cannot be dismissed as merely one option among many. This individual mentorship between mentor and student remains essential for developing technical mastery, artistic interpretation, and performance skills that meet professional standards. Whilst different educational approaches have value, the complete abandonment of specialised music training represents an educational catastrophe, not innovation.

### IMPACT

The restructure as proposed would:

- Deny music students at ANU access to the specialised training essential for professional musical careers by eliminating the proven 1:1 teaching model that has been the foundation of music education for centuries.
- Force current students to either transfer institutions or abandon their musical ambitions. MEAA does not consider the guarantees from university administrators that current students' musical education will not be affected to be transparent or accountable. There is no clarity on how current students will be able to complete their degrees with no faculty support.
- Reduce the quality and depth of musical education available to the community.
- Weaken the pipeline of qualified music educators for schools and communities across the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and regional NSW.

### DEVASTATING

The closure of the ANU School of Music would leave the national capital without a tertiary music school. This situation would:

- Force local students to relocate to other states to pursue music education, creating significant accessibility barriers.
- Eliminate career pathways for musicians, composers, and music scholars, not only in the ACT but across the nation.
- Devastate the local and national music community by removing a cultural and educational hub that supports professional development.
- Undermine Canberra's cultural identity as a national capital that should lead in arts and education.



ANU Orchestra Concerto Gala, May 2024. Photo: Yun Hu/ANU

- Create a skills shortage in the region's music and arts sectors, including devastating the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and youth music programs.
- Disadvantage students from regional NSW and ACT who have historically relied on this accessible option.
- Reduce opportunities to engage with musical culture for the broader community as student and faculty concerts and recitals disappear.

The national capital deserves and demands a strong tertiary music program that serves both local students and the broader region. The change proposal abandons that responsibility entirely.

### NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Once lost, musical expertise built over generations cannot easily be replaced. Australia's creative industries require skilled professionals, and the systematic elimination of training pathways undermines our national cultural and economic capacity.

Generalist arts degrees cannot meet the professional standards required for many music careers nor the accreditation and audition requirements of professional music organisations. This proposal effectively eliminates the university's ability to prepare students for professional musical careers and undermines the institution's credibility in music education.

The absence of specialised music training in Australia's national capital beyond those limitations outlined in the proposed restructure sends a troubling message about the value placed

on musical excellence and cultural education at the highest levels of government and society.

### MEAA POSITION

MEAA Musicians Section calls upon the Australian National University to:

1. Immediately withdraw this proposal and engage in meaningful consultation with music faculty, students, and the broader musical community.
2. Recognise the unique value of specialised music education in performance, composition and musicology and its irreplaceable role in cultural and educational life.
3. Commit to maintaining the ANU School of Music, including the essential 1:1 teaching model.
4. Recognise the special responsibility of a university in the national capital to maintain excellence in music education.
5. Consider the regional impact on students from across the ACT, southern NSW, and beyond who depend on this institution.

### COLLECTIVE POWER

This moment demands that every musician, music educator, student, alumnus, and supporter recognise our collective strength and act accordingly.

We urge all members of the musical community:

- Join your union: musicians must unite through MEAA membership to demonstrate our solidarity and power to defend music education.
- Support current music students and faculty during this period of uncertainty and support campaigns being run by the NTEU and the

Australian Music Student Association.

- Advocate for the essential role of specialised music education in our society at every level of government and institutional leadership.

If you are a working musician, join your union to call for greater respect, dignity and recognition for all working musicians, join MEAA.

The Australian National University has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in preserving excellence in music education. We encourage them to embrace this responsibility.

For more information, contact us here:

[musiciansaustralia@meaa.org](mailto:musiciansaustralia@meaa.org)

### ABOUT MEAA MUSICIANS

MEAA is the largest and most established union for Australia's creative and media workforce professionals. The MEAA Musicians Section represents musicians working across symphony orchestras (SOMA), theatre orchestras (TOMA) and gigging and freelance musicians (Musicians Australia). Our members come from all parts of the music industry, including live performance, recording and education.

As the collective voice of Australia's working musicians, we aim to create a stronger, more rewarding and productive music industry. This is driven by, and reflective of our diverse, inclusive and creative music cultures. We aim to ensure respect and recognition of all musicians through fair remuneration, reward, and recognition. ✨

## Put children above profit

**The Australian Education Union (AEU) welcomed the passing of the Early Childhood Education and Care (Strengthening Regulation of Early Education) Bill 2025 as a first step, following distressing reports of abuse in early childhood education and care (ECEC).**

AEU Deputy Federal President Meredith Peace said the legislation is one measure that will contribute to the urgent and systemic reform needed to restore community confidence in the ECEC system and to ensure the safety, care and education of every child.

"The AEU is deeply distressed by the recent allegations of abuse in early childhood education and care settings. Early Learning is important for children's development and

every parent must be able to place their trust in safe, secure and supported early learning environments," Peace said.

"The changes are welcome, but if we want to ensure we are embedding child safe practices and minimising risk to all children, the practice of under the roof ratios needs to cease, the threshold for quality standards needs to be lifted, and the workforce needs to be qualified, professionally paid and well supported.

"If funding does cease for providers who are not delivering safe, high-quality education and care, dedicated support and resources must be provided for the workforce, children and families."

Peace said it was essential that the assessments used to determine safety breaches

are robust and comprehensive, and that regulatory authorities are empowered and well-resourced to enforce quality and safety standards effectively.

"Regulatory authorities must be highly visible, properly funded, and have the powers they need to ensure compliance and uphold child safety, beyond entering facilities unannounced," she said.

"Consistency in regulation and safety enforcement across all early education and care settings is vital."

Peace also stressed that the majority of early childhood teachers and educators are dedicated, highly trained professionals who are deeply committed to the safety and wellbeing of children.

"What these teachers and educators need

now is support, not just in safety reforms, but in meaningful improvements to their pay, conditions, and resourcing," Peace said.

The AEU is calling for reforms that put children's educational and developmental needs above profit, and that ensure safe, high-quality care through increased public investment and further commitment by governments to the public provision of early childhood education.

"We have an opportunity now to strengthen the ECEC system, not just to prevent harm, but to create an environment where every child can thrive and every teacher and educator can work with dignity and security," Peace said. ✨



# HIV drug profiteering and global inequality

S Krishnaswamy

**The National Health Service in the UK has recently approved Hemgenix. The gene therapy drug that cures haemophilia B costs around £2.6 million (AU\$3.9m) for a single injection dose. This is now the world's priciest medicine. It is an indicator of our disabled pharma system.**

Life-saving innovations become designer commodities. Much of the development for gene therapy has come from publicly funded research. Though gene therapy drugs involve advanced manufacturing techniques, the price does not arise from that alone.

The profit-over-people forces also operate with deadly efficacy in HIV treatment. HIV patients are subjected to astronomical prices for life-saving drugs. This is not because of the costs of production but due to patent monopolies and greed.

Such prices are justified by drug companies claiming to spend about US\$2.6 billion on average on research and development costs per drug. However, more is spent on lobbying and marketing than on actual research and development.

They use it to extend monopolies through “evergreening” schemes, where small molecular manipulations are made to extend the patent monopoly. The result is one where medicine becomes a privilege rather than a right, and where the human right to health under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is trampled by intellectual property regimes and trade agreements.

## ACCESS TO MEDICINE DENIED

Lenacapavir, which is marketed under the brand name Sunlenca, is a medication used to treat HIV infection. This biannual injectable works with near-perfect HIV prevention. It is a potentially groundbreaking medication that has been referred to as “the closest we’ve ever come to an HIV vaccine.”

Gilead Sciences charges approximately US\$42,250 (AU\$62,200) per year for two doses required for treatment. Researchers at Liverpool University say this effective medication could be made for just

US\$40 per annum and still retain a 30 per cent profit margin.

The mathematics reveals the sinister logic of drug colonialism: a thousand-fold margin that effectively excludes communities in desperate need of life-saving technology from access to it.

When Lenacapavir remains out of reach, the World Health Organisation’s emergency July 2025 endorsement of the drug as a revolutionary preventative treatment seems ironic.

The PURPOSE1 trials proving Lenacapavir’s 100 per cent efficacy in preventing HIV infections enrolled over 5,000 women in South Africa and Uganda – populations now excluded from accessing the very drug that their participation helped validate.

The geographical injustice is further seen in the context of HIV “cures.” All instances of HIV remission or cure through stem cell therapy have occurred in non-endemic, developed nations – precisely where HIV burden is lowest. This is not a chance medical happening but systematic exclusion. Stem cell therapies using highly advanced devices and intensive supervision remain concentrated in the research facilities of the global north.

## MEDICAL APARTHEID

It creates a type of medical apartheid where the best interventions bypass the endemic regions completely. Africa harbours 65 per cent of global HIV cases but does not even receive crumbs from the therapy plate, a situation reflecting the colonial origins of global health.

The situation is compounded by classifying most Latin American countries as “middle income” and thus denying them discounted drug programs despite internal inequalities that lead to their vulnerable populations being ravaged by HIV.

The World Trade Organisation’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement globalised drug monopolies but contained “flexibilities” in theory to allow governments to evade patents for public health by compulsory licensing or parallel importation.

In the early 2000s, Thailand made available the antiretroviral drugs efavirenz and lopinavir/



Photo: NIAID – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

ritonavir using TRIPS flexibilities to authorise compulsory licences. In retaliation, the US added Thailand to its Special 301 watchlist, and manufacturers like Abbott and Sanofi threatened and initiated retaliatory measures, including withdrawal of drug registrations, in an effort to intimidate Thailand.

TRIPS “flexibilities” may be written down, but it requires committed political will to act against Western legal and trade reprisals. The Medicines Patent Pool – a UN-initiated initiative to increase generic availability – has no bite without voluntary licensing by patent holders. As a consequence, the majority of Latin American countries get excluded from generic Lenacapavir arrangements.

The result is a drug caste system. For example, cabotegravir inhibits the HIV integrase enzyme and prevents HIV replication. These injections are approved for Brazil but are priced at around (\$22,000) annually. Thus the drug is far beyond reach even though it has regulatory approval. In such a profit-oriented world, the models from China and Cuba are beacons of hope.

## ALTERNATE MODELS

China’s “Four Frees and One Care” policy, initially enacted in 2003, offers free HIV counselling and testing, antiretroviral treatment to the impoverished, medication to prevent HIV transmission to children, education to AIDS orphans, and financial support to affected families. This policy has significantly expanded testing coverage.

It has also made voluntary testing and free treatment more widely available. The policies have lowered the cost burden on patients and AIDS deaths. The policy, grounded in equitable access rather than profit-driven structures, continues to be the cornerstone of China’s HIV/AIDS response despite some of its shortcomings, like inadequate finances and bureaucratic challenges.

Similarly, Cuba’s nationwide health system – integrated universal HIV treatment and prevention program – views health as a right of citizenship rather than a marketable commodity. These actions demonstrate that the promotion of public health over patent protection results in more successful and

humane results, acknowledging that the only way to properly treat HIV is to remove cost as a barrier. The battle over the cost of HIV drugs is the front line in the overall struggle for health as a human right.

When a drug that can cost US\$40 is produced and sold for US\$42,000, it is not innovation. It is daylight robbery that is legalised by monopoly. Stem cell “cures” being only available in wealthy nations while Africa remains a research colony is not science. It is medical apartheid.

When nations like China and Cuba are able to offer universal HIV treatment while the US files a lawsuit to stop drug price being lowered, it shows the greed behind capitalism.

It is necessary that if ‘health for all’ is to succeed, the governments of the global south must oppose patent fundamentalism; corporate greed has to be exposed; and international solidarity is necessary in demanding that life-saving medications be accessible and available to all who need them.

*People’s Democracy* (Abridged for reasons of space) ✳

# Work from home – a worker’s right

**The Finance Sector Union (FSU) strongly supports the commitment by the Victorian government to legislate the right to work from home (WFH) for at least two days a week.**

Working from home is an entitlement many finance workers cherish as it allows them to balance work, family and their life outside of work. Yet, for those workers without strong enterprise agreements, they have no right to flexibility.

Enterprise Agreements in the finance sector have delivered protections to working from home but many employers refuse to bargain or refuse to add the right to work from home in their agreements.

Finance workers will be emboldened by this significant move to bargain even more strongly in their workplaces for agreements that recognise and respect their right to flexibility.

FSU National Assistant Secretary Nicole McPherson said:

“Finance workers warmly welcome this announcement by Premier Jacinta Allan. Her commitment is a recognition of the fact that working from home shouldn’t be a privilege, but a right.

“This should be a wake-up call to Australian banks including the National Australia Bank whose CEO Andrew Irvine has moved to increase office attendance without consulting with his workforce and their union.

“The finance sector has the technology and types of work that make flexible working for many workers not just possible, but easy.

“It’s time finance sector employers recognised this and worked to ensure their agreements have clear provisions to allow for workplace flexibility, including working from home.

“This is an important move to bargain

even more strongly in their workplaces for agreements that recognise and respect their right to flexibility.”

Meanwhile, the FSU has blasted the Commonwealth Bank for axing frontline roles in favour of automation and offshoring, calling it a new low for a bank already under fire for sending jobs overseas.

A total of 90 jobs are due to be cut, with the union warning that CBA is now replacing skilled Australian workers with AI systems as well as cheaper offshore labour.

This includes 45 roles in Direct Banking, cut due to the introduction of a new voice bot system on the bank’s inbound customer enquiries line in June this year.

Jobs cut also include local Customer Messaging Specialist roles – those who customers interact with through the bank’s online chat. This is also being done in CBA India, which is currently advertising more roles.

The FSU says workers affected by new technology should be retrained and supported into new roles, not discarded in the name of cost-cutting.

The union supports the use of new technology and AI in banking but say it must be done in partnership with workers, not at their expense.

Finance Sector Union National Secretary Julia Angrisano said:

“Just when we think CBA can’t sink any lower, they start cutting jobs because of AI on top of sneakily offshoring work to India.

“There is a human cost to this. You can’t just replace frontline jobs with a voice bot and expect the same service for customers.

Finance Sector Union ✳



# From Tindal to Tel Aviv – Australia supplies IDF



Photo: Defence Imagery – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Kellie Tranter and Peter Cronau have revealed in *Declassified Australia* that on at least two occasions this year, F-35 fighter jet parts have been sent from the RAAF base Tindal, just outside of Katherine, to Israel to meet parts shortages there and allow Israeli F-35 jets to continue to carry out bombing campaigns on Gaza, southern Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, and Iran. The parts were sent from the RAAF base Tindal to the RAAF base Williamstown, near Newcastle – one of three regional hubs for maintenance and warehousing of F-35 joint strike fighter parts (the other two hubs being in the Netherlands and the US). The parts were then sent on commercial airlines to Tel Aviv, Israel, via Thailand.

As Kellie Tranter details in a follow-up article, the Dutch F-35 warehousing facility has ceased sending parts to Israel since 12 February 2024 after “a Dutch appeals court ordered the Netherlands to stop exporting and transiting F-35 parts to Israel, saying there was a clear risk they were being used in ‘serious violations of international

humanitarian law.’” Since this court ruling, the Asia-Pacific regional hub for the F35 fighter jet, located at the RAAF base Williamstown, has picked up the slack, providing ongoing operational support to Israel’s F-35 fleet via its parts transfers.

Lockheed-Martin’s distributed military procurement program for the F-35 jet, involving some 1,900 companies in eight countries, has proven a useful alibi for producer-states in overcoming pressure to end the supply of parts where the jets are implicated in atrocities.

When facing legal challenges over the supply of F-35 components that may be involved in Israel’s genocide, Western governments have repeatedly cited “the global nature of the F-35 production program.” Insisting that because components get “fed into centralised global distribution hubs in the United States and in Netherlands,” and they simply don’t know which parts go to Israel, and which parts go elsewhere, Western governments have effectively argued that the military and diplomatic significance of the F-35 joint strike fighter program takes precedence over their legal obligations under international law to prevent genocide. Now even

this alibi has been taken away from the Australian government as the evidence of direct arms transfers from Australia to Israel continues to pile up.

Lockheed-Martin’s global defence procurement program for the F-35 fighter jet features heavily in United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese’s most recent report on corporate actors profiting from the genocide in Palestine. Albanese was promptly sanctioned by the US government for exposing the role of US corporate actors in Israel’s Gaza holocaust.

“Components and parts constructed globally contribute to the Israeli F-35 fleet, which Israel customises and maintains in partnership with Lockheed Martin and domestic companies,” she writes. “Post-October 2023, F-35s and F-16s have been integral to equipping Israel with the unprecedented aerial power to drop an estimated 85,000 tons of bombs, much of it unguided, to kill and injure more than 179,411 Palestinians and obliterate Gaza.”

Militarism in the NT

## FBI in Aotearoa – is Australia next?

Maximus M

The United States’ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director and MAGA loyalist, Kash Patel has travelled to New Zealand in-order to secure a deal to expand the FBI influence in the country. The narrative that Patel has used is that he needs to combat growing influence of People’s Republic of China in the region. The FBI has maintained a presence in the country since 2017, but this new expansion is a significant upgrade in its abilities in New Zealand.

Kash Patel has said that the FBI “is actually prioritising a permanent presence across all Five Eyes Countries...” This statement made by the FBI Director should be concerning to all Australians, as we are apart

of the so-called Five Eyes Alliance, an ‘anglosphere’ alliance of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. Just before travelling to New Zealand, Patel had travelled to Sydney to meet with Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke in a secretive meeting that wasn’t publicly recognised at the time by either government.

Tony Burke said, “We share a commitment to keeping our people safe, and I’m optimistic about what we can achieve together in the interest of national security.”

With a lack of transparency about the meeting one can suspect that this is the beginning of an expanded FBI role in Australia.

Given the FBI’s very political history and present use as a weapon for the US President, Australians should be very concerned.

## PEACE NOTES

### Myths of militarism

People who work for peace are used to being told that they’re too idealistic. In fact, the pro-war and pro-military build-up crowd are often believers in the following myths.

#### Myth One: Military strength will ensure peace

It sounds sensible at first. If we are properly armed, other countries won’t attack us, so the world will be a more peaceful place, right? Wrong! An arms build-up on one nation can inspire arms build-ups in other nations, leaving all involved worse off (because they’ve spent money on weapons that could have been spent on making the people healthy and educated) and still fearful. The other problem with this myth is that weapons tend to be used. Just look at the number of wars waged by the US.

#### Myth Two: Military spending helps economic recovery

‘It’s good for the economy’ is a popular justification for spending an eye-watering amount of money that comes from the working people of a nation on weapons. Australia is particularly prone to the line that military spending involves jobs. We have governments who won’t help the car industry out, but use ‘jobs’ as an argument for spending more money than has ever been spent by this country on nuclear-powered submarines and missiles under AUKUS.

It’s true that money spent on the military produces *some* jobs. According to German economic research outfit the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, military spending has a distorted affect on the economy because spending on the military is divorced from the needs of society. When it comes to jobs, spending on education, healthcare, and clean energy all produce more jobs than spending on the armed forces and their equipment.

#### Myth Three: War is bad, but at least there are technological spin-offs that are good

Most people know about spinoffs. You’re using a famous one every day – the internet. DARPA, the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, is an R&D arm of the US military and famously invented the internet as a way for the armed forces to communicate with each other after a nuclear attack. Hurrah for DARPA! Not so fast. Economist Mariana Mazzucato has looked at the facts. What really made a difference for the internet was universities, companies and laboratories, all backed by government funding. The web browsers and addresses that we take for granted were developed at a civilian project, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), so that scientists could share their discoveries speedily. CERN has discovered new subatomic particles and introduced HTML which makes all your web pages possible, it sounds like a much better use of money than buying a new missile system.

#### Myth Four: Atomic weapons meant that there were no wars after 1945

This one is an updated version of the ‘peace through strength’ argument, and is trotted out by a lot of people who should know better. The nuclear powers were afraid to go to war, fearing that the other side’s nuclear weapons wiped them from the face of the earth, therefore nuclear weapons are a good thing.

While it’s true that there hasn’t been a world war since the last, pre-atomic world war, this line of reasoning is very dodgy. Sure the nuclear powers haven’t used their nukes since the bombing of Nagasaki 80 years ago, but nuclear weapons haven’t prevented wars in Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, we could go on. The Palestinian people have no reason to thank Israel’s nuclear arsenal for peace. When someone says that nuclear weapons kept the peace, what they mean is that nukes kept the peace in the countries they care about.

The Communist Party of Australia is working for peace through disarmament and political resolution of disputes. That’s way more realistic than the military lobby would like you to think.



# Drought and tariffs hit coffee market hard

**From drought-stricken farms to rising trade barriers, the global coffee industry is facing unprecedented strain.**

Eight years ago, when Debbie Wei Mullin founded her company Copper Cow, she wanted to bring Vietnamese coffee into the mainstream. Vietnam, the world's second-largest exporter of coffee, is known for growing robusta beans.

Earthier and more bitter than the arabica beans grown in Brazil, Colombia, and other coffee-growing regions near the Equator, robusta beans are often thought of as producing lower-quality coffee.

In an effort to rebrand robusta, Mullin signed deals with coffee farming cooperatives in Vietnam and created smooth blends. Over the years, she helped a cohort of farmers convert their operations to organic.

"We put in huge investments and were certified as the first organic specialty-grade coffee farms ever in Vietnam," said the CEO and founder. In a few weeks, Copper Cow is planning to launch its first line of organic coffee at Whole Foods and Target (in the US).

But the second Trump administration has changed the calculus of her business. Mullin said she "was bullish" about her company's prospects when President Donald Trump first took office, believing that Vietnam would likely be exempt from exorbitant tariffs since the president has many supporters in the coastal Southeast Asian country. Then, in April of this year, the White House announced a 46 per cent tariff on goods from Vietnam.

The shock left Mullin rethinking the very thesis she had set out to prove. "A big part of our mission is about how robusta beans, when treated better, can provide this really great cup of coffee at a lower

price," she said. "Once you put a 46 per cent tariff on there, does this business model work anymore?"

Trump soon paused his country-specific tariffs for a few months, replacing them with a near-universal 10 per cent tax. Since then, Trump announced on social media that he would lower Vietnam's eventual tariff from 46 to 20 per cent – a sharp price hike that still worries Mullin. Meanwhile, Trump has threatened to impose an astounding 50 per cent tariff on goods from Brazil, the nation's largest importer of coffee, starting 1 August.

## PUNITIVE TARIFFS

"I joke with my partner that I feel like I'm in a macroeconomics class," said Mullin. In lieu of raising its prices, Copper Cow, which sells directly to consumers as well as to retailers, has scrambled to cut costs by reconsidering its quarterly team get-togethers and slowing down its timeline for helping more farmers go organic.

The price of coffee hit an all-time high earlier this year, a dramatic rise due in part to ongoing climate-fueled droughts in the global coffee belt. As the US considers fuelling a trade war with coffee-producing countries, "it just feels like such an insult to an injury," said Mullin. "It's like, let's have an earthquake hit a place that is in the middle of a hurricane."

Economists like to say that demand for coffee is relatively inelastic – drinkers are so attached to their daily caffeine fix that they keep buying it even when prices increase. As the Trump administration mounts its retaliatory trade agenda, that theory will be put to the test.

Coffee growers, as well as the roasters and sellers that purchase



Photo: coffee-rank.com – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

them in the US, are now facing unforeseen geopolitical and economic challenges. "We have not seen tariffs of this magnitude before," said David Ortega, a professor of food and economics policy at Michigan State University. "There's no playbook for this."

Should Trump's threatened tariffs go into effect, it will likely hurt consumers, as many businesses will pass on the costs by raising prices. But it could also have ripple effects on coffee farms, as companies may cut costs by pulling back on investments in environmentally-conscious practices like organic or regenerative agriculture.

"Our goal was always to slowly convert the rest of our products to certified organic," said Mullin. "And we feel like that is not an option anymore because of the tariffs."

Even if the tariffs did not go into effect in August, the ongoing economic uncertainty would likely impact coffee growers in Brazil, which provided 35 per cent of America's unroasted coffee supply as of 2023. As US coffee companies navigate the Trump administration's evolving trade policies, they are likely to seek out new, cheaper markets for coffee beans. "Suddenly, they become less attached to where they source their coffee from," said João Brites, director of growth and innovation at HowGood, a data platform that helps food companies measure and reduce carbon emissions along their supply chain.

The problem with that, according to Ortega, is that other countries in the coffee belt, such as Colombia, do not have the production capacity to match Brazil's and meet US demand for coffee. If the threat of punitive tariffs on Brazil kickstarts an increase in demand for coffee from other countries, that will likely raise prices. For coffee drinkers, "there are very few substitutes," said Ortega.

These pressures on coffee

farmers and buyers are coming after a period of worsening climate impacts. Most of the coffee grown in Brazil – about 60 per cent – comes from smallholder farms, grown on about 25 or fewer acres of land.

"The current reality they're operating in is that they're already very stretched," particularly because of weather disruptions, said Brites. Coffee grows best in tropical climates, but in recent years unprecedented droughts in Brazil have stunted growers' yields, forcing exporters to dip into and almost deplete their coffee reserves.

Vietnam has been rocked by drought and heat waves – and though robusta beans need less water to grow than arabica beans, making them a relatively climate-resilient crop, growers have also seen their yields decline. (Mullin said she is seeing early signs of harvests rebounding this year.)

Brites speculated that US companies buying from smallholder farms in Brazil may be able to pressure growers into selling their beans at lower prices, adding to the economic precarity that these growers face.

"For a lot of these coffee growers, the US is such a big market," he said, adding that it would take time for them to find new buyers in other markets.

Growers themselves are worried. Mariana Veloso, a Brazilian coffee producer and exporter, said producers are facing logistical challenges – and anticipating more. "If we want to ship a coffee in the next month, we will probably not be able to," said Veloso, remarking that sometimes cargo ships holding coffee sit at Brazilian ports for weeks before setting out. Shipping companies seem to be delaying shipments from Brazil, said Veloso, perhaps in anticipation of the looming tariffs.

In the US, not every coffee company sources from Brazil or Vietnam. But the Trump administration's existing 10 per cent

across-the-board tariffs are still rattling the coffee business.

"We source coffees from all around the world. So we're not immune to anything," said Kevin Hartley, founder and CEO of Cambio Roasters, an aluminium K-cup coffee brand. He added, "You know, 10 per cent here and 30 per cent there, that's not trivial."

Hartley added that one of the impacts of droughts on coffee growers is that younger farmers worried about the future are considering leaving the business. "In coffee farming families around the world, it's a tough life and the current generation is showing reticence to take off where their parents began," he said.

Regardless of whether the US imposes prohibitive tariffs on individual coffee-growing countries, climate change is already taking a toll on this workforce. "Everyone's looking for a solution for this," said Mullin, who believes robusta beans can offer a drought-resistant alternative to the ever-popular arabica beans.

Copper Cow has even started experimenting with a lesser-known varietal of coffee beans called liberica, which requires even less water to grow than robusta beans. "And it's delicious," Mullin said. It's an extremely labour-intensive crop because the coffee plant grows so tall, but one of the farmer cooperatives she works with is starting to plant them now, thinking the investment will be worth it as temperatures keep rising.

This new era of environmental, economic, and geopolitical challenges has shaken coffee brands.

"Everybody's wondering, in 50 years, will there be much coffee anymore? People are trying to be really realistic about what that world is going to look like," said Mullin. In the midst of that broader uncertainty, the impact of Trump's tariffs is another question only time can answer.

GRIST.org

## This new era of environmental, economic, and geopolitical challenges has shaken coffee brands

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# Sanctions kill half a million civilians per year

Vijay Prashad

**A study in *The Lancet* estimates that unilateral sanctions have caused as much death as wars, with an estimated half a million deaths per year.**

Those who do not live in war zones or in suffocated countries are forced to live life as if there is nothing strange about what is happening around us. When we read about war, it is disconnected from our lives, and many of us want to stop listening to anything about the human misery caused by weapons or by sanctions.

The scholasticism of the academic and the hushed tones of the diplomat are silenced as the bomb and the bank wage war against the planet. After authorising the atom bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima (Japan) on 6 August 1945, US President Harry S Truman announced on the radio: "If [the Japanese] do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth."

Truman justified the use of that hideous weapon by deceitfully alleging that Hiroshima was a military base. Yet he failed to mention that his bomb – known as 'Little Boy' – killed large numbers of civilians.

According to the City of Hiroshima, "the exact number of deaths from the atomic bombing is still unknown. Estimates place the number of dead by the end of December 1945, when the acute effects of radiation poisoning had largely subsided, at roughly 140,000." The total population of Hiroshima at that time was 350,000, meaning that 40% of the city's population died within five months of the blast. A 'rain of ruin' had already befallen them.

*The Lancet*, one of the most distinguished magazines on health and medicine, published an article by Francisco Rodríguez, Silvio Rendón, and Mark Weisbrot with a very scientific title: "Effects of international sanctions on age-specific mortality: a cross-national panel data analysis."

These scholars have studied the impact of sanctions mostly imposed by the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations (UN). While these measures are often called 'international sanctions,' in reality there is nothing international about them.

Most sanctions are conducted outside the realm of the UN Charter, chapter five of which insists that such measures can only be taken through a UN Security Council resolution. This is most often not done, and powerful states – mostly the United States and members of the European Union – institute illegal, unilateral sanctions against countries that exceed the logic of human decency.

According to the Global

Sanctions Database, the United States, European Union, and UN have sanctioned 25% of the countries in the world. The United States by itself sanctioned 40% of these countries, sanctions that are unilateral because they do not have the assent of a UN Security Council resolution.

In the 1960s, only 8% of the world's countries were under sanctions. This inflation of sanctions demonstrates that it has become normal for the powerful North Atlantic states to wage wars without having to fire a bullet. As US President Woodrow Wilson said in 1919 at the formation of the League of Nations, sanctions are "something more tremendous than war."

The cruellest formulation of Wilson's statement was made by Madeleine Albright, then the US ambassador to the UN, regarding the US sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s. A distinguished team of specialists from the Centre for Economic and Social Rights went to Iraq and analysed the data to find that from 1990 to 1996, sanctions had resulted in the "excess deaths of over 500,000 children under the age of five. In simple terms, more Iraqi children have died as a result of sanctions than the combined toll of two atomic bombs on Japan and the recent scourge of ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia."

On the CBS television program *60 Minutes*, journalist Leslie Stahl asked Albright about this study, saying "we have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that is more children than died in Hiroshima. And you know, is the price worth it?" This was a sincere question.

Albright had the opportunity to say many things: she could have said that she had not yet had time to study the report, or she could have shifted the blame to the policies of Saddam Hussein. Instead, she answered, "I think that it is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it."

In other words, it was worth killing half a million children to destabilise the Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein. Of course, that government was not overthrown by sanctions. Instead, the people suffered for another seven years, for which there was no comparable study done on excess deaths.

It took the massive illegal US invasion to overthrow the Iraqi government (illegal because there was no UN Security Council resolution). To be fair to Albright, she later said, "I have said 5,000 times that I regret it. It was a stupid statement. I never should have made it." But she did. And it made its mark.

Those who inflict pain through sanctions know full well what they are doing. Albright said that her statement was "stupid," but she did not say that the policy was wrong.

In 2019, Associated Press's



Photo: Grant Neufeld – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Matt Lee asked US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the sanctions imposed on Venezuela, to which he replied, "We always wish things could go faster ... The circle is tightening. The humanitarian crisis is increasing by the hour. ... You can see the increasing pain and suffering that the Venezuelan people are suffering from." Pompeo's statement is emblematic and correct: the illegal sanctions create *pain and suffering*.

So, what does *The Lancet*'s new study on international sanctions show?

1. From 1971 to 2021, unilateral sanctions have been the cause of death for 564,258 people per year.
2. The number of people who die because of sanctions is greater than the number of battle-related casualties (106,000 deaths per year) "and similar to some estimates in the total death toll of wars including civilian casualties (around half a million deaths per year)."
3. The most vulnerable population groups, as you would expect, are children under five and older people. Deaths of children under five years "represented 51% of total deaths caused by sanctions over the 1970–2021 period."
4. Unilateral sanctions by the United States and the European Union are more deadly than UN sanctions, with "US sanctions appear[ing] to be driving the adverse mortality effects." This is because "unilateral sanctions imposed by the USA or the EU might be designed in ways that have a greater negative effect on target populations."
5. The reason why US sanctions – with the EU alongside them – have such negative effects is

due to the "widespread use of the US dollar and the euro in international banking transactions and as global reserve currencies, and the extraterritorial application of sanctions, particularly by the USA."

6. The analysis shows that "the effects of sanctions on mortality generally increase over time, with longer-lived sanctions episodes resulting in higher tolls on lives."

Based on these findings, the study concludes that "from a rights-based perspective, evidence that sanctions lead to losses in lives should be sufficient reason to advocate for the suspension of their use."

In March 2025, we published a dossier called *Imperialist War and Feminist Resistance in the Global*

*South*, primarily looking at the case of Venezuela, and which described the impact of sanctions and how a society under attack is held together by the work of women.

They know what the 'rain of ruin' feels like and they are fighting to strengthen their societies against it. As we showed in our FACTS analysis, sanctions against Venezuela resulted in a loss of 213% of its Gross Domestic Product between January 2017 and December 2024, which amounts to a total estimated loss of \$226 billion or \$77 million per day.

In 1995, during the sanctions against Iraq and before the United States invaded that country illegally in 2003, Saadi Youssef (1934–2021) wrote a miraculous poem called "America, America." Here is the last stanza:

We are not hostages, America,  
and your soldiers are not God's soldiers...  
We are the poor ones, ours is the earth of the drowned gods,  
the gods of bulls,  
the gods of fires,  
the gods of sorrows that intertwine clay and blood in a song ...  
We are the poor, ours is the god of the poor,  
who emerges out of farmers' ribs,  
hungry  
and bright,  
and raises heads up high...  
America, we are the dead.  
Let your soldiers come.  
Whoever kills a man, let him resurrect him.  
We are the drowned ones, dear lady.  
We are the drowned.  
Let the water come.

## Sanctions are 'something more tremendous than war.'



# “And ain’t I a woman?”

Tom Pearson revisits two landmark books: Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* and Angela Davis’ *Women, Race & Class*.

**These two books were published a decade apart, Greer’s in 1971 and Davis’ in 1982. Though they have the same subject – women’s rights – politically and philosophically they head off in different directions.**

*The Female Eunuch* charts a passage to the conclusion that men will only be able to shrug off their sexual hang-ups if they are liberated from their sexual prejudices, and that this can only happen if women free themselves from the confines of male domination.

On a first reading it is a stunning journey because there are many recognisable experiences along the way. Self-recognition stirs deep emotions: Like the listener at the concert in the song *Killing Me Softly*, I felt Greer had “found my letters and read each one out loud.”

However, having read the final page and put the book down, I was left wondering how to change things beyond correcting my own behaviour and attitudes. Perhaps this was

strictly from my reading of it as a male; perhaps for women it is truly a guide to action.

I think its major drawback comes from it being based primarily on an incorrect premise, the male-female divide, with the result that the conclusions it draws are for the most part also incorrect.

For Greer, attitudes and impressions are all-important.

This is summed up in a concise way in the final chapter, titled “Revolution”, when the author speaks directly to the reader:

“At various stages in my life,” she says, “I have lived with men of known violence, two of whom had convictions for Grievous Bodily Harm, and in no case was I ever offered any physical aggression, because it was abundantly clear from my attitude that I was not impressed by it.”

Greer goes straight through, from start to finish, pointing a damning finger at romance novels, Hollywood, French farce, giving them all hell. Her list is long and eclectic because every institution, organisation and cultural manifestation has, in one way or another, undoubtedly contributed to the oppression of women. But, in the end, what are we to make out of it all?

Davis’ book, unlike Greer’s, is not linear;

that is, it doesn’t go from start to finish in a more or less straight line. Instead, *Women, Race & Class* has a structure that expands and deepens.

Beginning with an examination of the sharpest class division of all, slavery, and in particular the role of women slaves, it builds a picture of the historical development of the women’s rights struggle, and so the class struggle, in the USA.

In the process Davis strips away the falsehoods of previous studies of the Black slaves in America, such as that the women were mostly cooks or maids, or mammies for the children in the “big house”.

She recounts how women slaves were forced into the fields to labour alongside the men, how they “bore the terrible burden of equality in oppression” and “also asserted their equality aggressively in challenging the inhuman institution of slavery.”

Like Greer, Davis gathers together the words and actions of the outstanding individuals in their time. But what is missing in *The Female Eunuch* and prominent in *Women, Race & Class* are the masses who were the driving force of change.

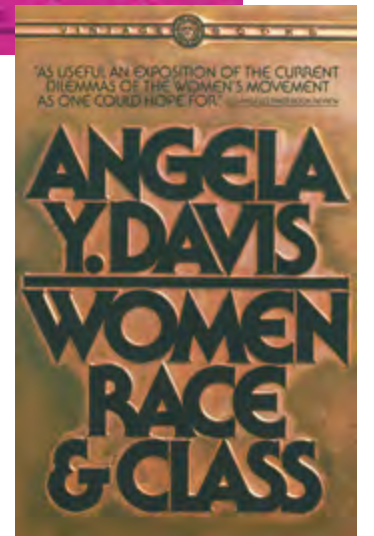
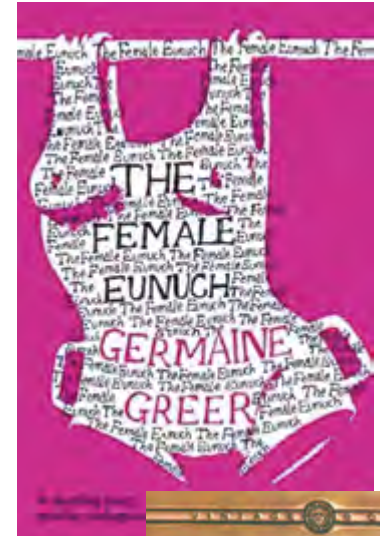
We meet the likes of Sojourner Truth, the only Black woman attending an 1851 women’s convention in Akron, Ohio. When she spoke, her words silenced the jeers and insults of hostile men at the meeting:

“I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne 13 children and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?”

## CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE

To know the essence of something, and so begin to know it in its entirety, we must understand its history from the perspective of the people who made that history. Here can be found the crucial philosophical difference between the two books.

*The Female Eunuch*, in the end, leaves it to the individual to act on her own behalf. Greer is at its centre – her cutting humour, her astute observations, her flaunting of



conventions. This makes for an insightful, hard-hitting and sometimes wildly funny book.

*Women, Race & Class* sets out to build its story acknowledging the individual while recognising the power of the collective. Based on this premise Davis puts her subject before herself.

This does not diminish her as an individual, and while we might guess at her personal opinions and inner-most feelings, we are left in no doubt as to the source of the problem and what is necessary to overcome it. ★

## Solutions to Crossword

Guardian 4 August 2025 #2156

### Across

2. **INXS** – Famous again, thanks to the Top 100
5. **ADMINISTRATION** – ALP uses this to steal a union from its members
7. **TARDIS** – Small but spacey, anywhere, any-when
9. **NUCLEAR** – Weapons, also distraction from climate action

### Down

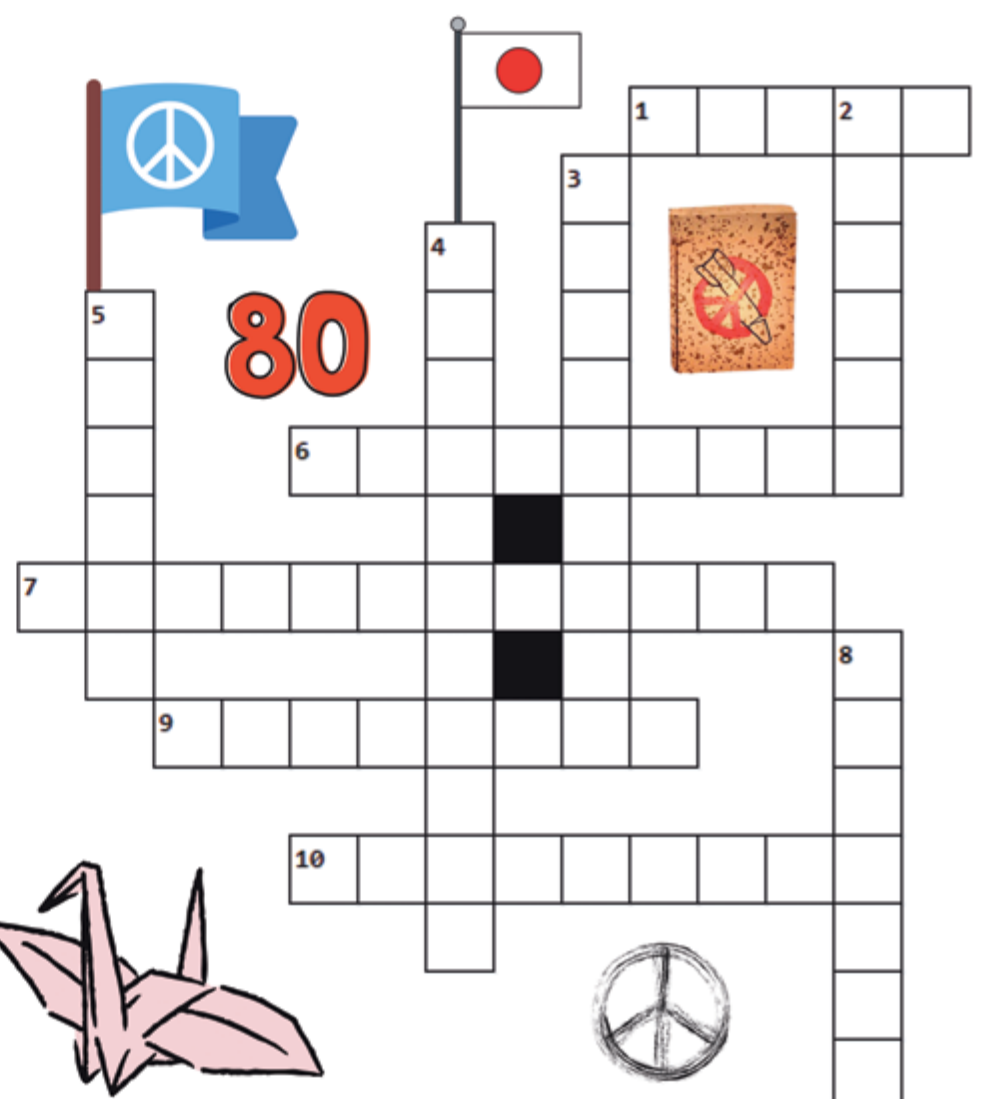
1. **INFINITY** – To this and beyond!
3. **AIRDROP** – Israel doing this to pretend it cares
4. **TARIFF** – Trump thinks it is a magic word
6. **OSBOURNE** – Birmingham metal-master, recently deceased
8. **ENVOY** – Useless or worse job, helps PM show he cares

### Down;

2. US president who ordered the war crimes to be committed (6)
3. Japanese term for survivors of the atomic bombings (9)
4. Famous exhibition, showing what little remains of a person vaporised from a nuclear weapon (5-6)
5. Name of atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki (3-3)
8. Solemn period observed at 8.15 am August 6 (7)

### Across;

1. Japanese city, original target of atomic attack (5)
6. Toxic precipitation caused by nuclear attack (5-4)
7. Young girl, victim of radiation-related cancer, inspired paper crane movement (6-6)
9. Nickname of aeroplane that dropped the first atomic weapon in warfare (5-3)
10. Partially ruined building, now a memorial to the first nuclear strike (1-4-4)





# Opium for the masculine

## Hulk Hogan 1953-2025

Jan Farmer

**I came to Hulk Hogan late, born too recently to see him in his 1980s pro-wrestling prime, but always saw him as the embodiment of pure media slop. In the pantomime that is professional wrestling, everyone has a part to play and everyone in the audience knows they're playing a part, but enjoys going along with it anyway.**

Some wrestlers are bad guys, others lovable rogues, some embody (often racist) ethnic stereotypes. Some are good guys. Hulk Hogan, real name Terry Gene Bollea was for most of his career, one of the good guys, an all-American heart-of-gold type.

But Hogan was a union buster. He grassed up his co-stars to the CEO during unionisation efforts, and is the main reason why to this day professional wrestling, a very dangerous and injury-prone profession, does not have a union. Wrestlers apparently have to sign a promise not to organise a union or join one. Hogan's former friend, Jesse 'the Body' Ventura said of Hogan, "it doesn't surprise me to see Hogan with the Republicans, because Hogan is as anti-union as it gets."

Hogan finished on a sad note in many ways. He was recorded using racist expressions, accused of misogyny and homophobia, and sexual assault. One of his signature moves was ripping his t-shirt in public, being barely able to rip a cheap T-shirt with his deteriorating steroid muscles to reveal a MAGA shirt.

The MAGA-support was no coincidence. Trump always enjoyed pro-wrestling and appeared on it in his fake-tycoon days (which have never really ended). Trumpism and pro-wrestling US style have a lot in common: everyone knows it's fake, but

supporters enjoy it. Just as the widespread knowledge that pro-wrestling is scripted entertainment rather than a sport doesn't worry fans, the exposure of Trump's thousands of lies doesn't cost him any support in the MAGA movement. Both pro-wrestling and MAGA trade on a fake working-class persona: Trump was born a millionaire, but comes across as the embodiment of the ordinary man against the 'elites.' Press that cooperates with this ignores genuine working-class heroes like Chris Smalls, who unionised Amazon workplaces against the odds.

A line can also be drawn from Hulk-omania, the phenomenon of Hulk Hogan adoration that led to thousands of action figures being sold (also Hogan's appearance in child-friendly movies), to the 'manosphere,' the world of toxic masculinity promoted by crypto-fascists such as Andrew Tate, Joe Rogan, Elon Musk, and Jordan Peterson. Hogan's fun, over-the-top macho persona was the vehicle for an unhealthy and dangerous mindset in men towards themselves and towards women. Hogan's fans were encouraged to 'train, say their prayers and take their vitamins,' anticipating the simplistic advice that Petersen couches his far-right, misogynist act in. It sounded simple and useful, but came from a hyper-individualistic and consumerist vision of masculinity.

The appeal of Hogan and tv wrestling worked on an alienated population – people watching and identifying with impossible physical feats, rather than enjoying the real physical treats available in their communities. Real, non-alienated physical action is something socialists are working for.

So I don't mourn Hulk Hogan, but rather paraphrase the German poet Jacobowski: don't smile because it's over! Cry because it has been. ★



Hulk Hogan, 2015. Photo: Miguel Discart – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

# Kneecap – Soundtrack to the struggle

**In an era of cultural homogenisation and sanitised commercial music, Irish language, punk-rap trio Kneecap stand out as a raw, unapologetic expression of working-class resistance and international solidarity with the oppressed. Their explosive rise to fame is not just a musical phenomenon but a political one – rooted in anti-imperialism, socialist struggle, and the reclamation of Irish identity under capitalist oppression.**

Kneecap's popularity reflects growing discontent among the working class, particularly in the North of Ireland, where inequality, occupation, sectarianism and class exploitation remain defining features of daily life.

Kneecap's music channels the justified fury of a generation betrayed by "the peace process" in Ireland: a process that promised prosperity and apple pie, but delivered only increased marginalisation for working-class communities who are worse off by every metric now than they were in 1998.

Their lyrics articulate this rage brilliantly, whether attacking British imperialism (Get Your Brits Out) or exposing the failures of neoliberal capitalism (Better Way to Live). However, anger alone, no matter how potent, cannot dismantle the structures of oppression.

History has shown repeatedly that cultural resistance, while vital, must be coupled with organised

working-class politics to achieve revolutionary change. The ruling class can tolerate – and even commodify – rebellious art, so long as it remains disconnected from mass political movements. Kneecap's radical energy is electrifying, but without ties to organised socialist and republican struggles, it risks being absorbed as mere spectacle.

Kneecap's globally eye-catching performance at Glastonbury – one of the world's most high-profile music festivals – was a watershed moment, not just for the group but for Irish radical culture. Their set, delivered partly in Irish and punctuated by anti-imperialist visuals (including burning parliament and Palestinian flags), was a direct provocation to the British establishment.

The establishment's reaction was telling. The British state has always sought to depoliticise art, especially when it challenges its legitimacy. Kneecap's presence at Glastonbury – a festival often criticised for its commercialisation and performative activism – disrupted the illusion of harmless dissent. Their performance wasn't just entertainment; it was class warfare in real-time. But symbolic challenges alone will not break the power of capitalism and imperialism.

One of Kneecap's revolutionary acts is their use of *An Ghaeilge* [the Irish language]. Kneecap rejects the bourgeois appropriation of their native language, instead wielding

it as a weapon of proletarian defiance. By rapping in Irish, they reclaim our language from the conservatism of state-sponsored revival efforts and restore its radical potential. The group's insistence on performing in Irish, even when English would guarantee broader commercial success, is a direct challenge to cultural imperialism and the commodification of identity under capitalism. Yet language, like music, is only a tool. Its revolutionary power depends on who wields it and to what end. The Irish language movement, historically tied to anti-colonial struggle, is and must continue to be connected to the broader fight against capitalism.

The significance of Kneecap's platform cannot be overstated, but their message must be directed toward building working-class organisation. Imagine if their call to "get your Brits out" were linked not just to cultural expression but to concrete campaigns – tenant unions, workplace organising, or mass mobilisation for Irish reunification under socialist principles. This is where their potential truly lies: not just in voicing discontent, but in helping to organise it.

Kneecap's organic, working-class appeal is their greatest strength. Unlike corporate-backed artists who sanitise their politics, they remain rooted in the communities they represent. But for their message to translate into material change, it must feed into organised struggle. The energy of their crowds



Kneecap. Photo: publicity shot

– chanting anti-imperialist slogans, fists raised in solidarity – must be harnessed beyond the mosh pit.

This is not a critique of Kneecap, but a challenge to all of us who are inspired by them. Revolutionary art is essential, but it is not sufficient. The next step is building the structures – the unions, the parties, the mass movements – that can turn cultural resistance into political power.

As the ruling class tightens its grip, artists like Kneecap provide something rare: a voice for the voiceless, a soundtrack for rebellion, and proof that another world

is possible. Their success isn't just measured in streams or sales, but in the growing militancy of a generation waking up to its own power.

Kneecap has given the Irish working class something invaluable: a voice, a rallying cry, and proof that resistance is alive. But as Lenin reminded us, without revolutionary theory and organisation, there can be no revolution. Their music is the spark – now it's up to the organised working class to fan it into flames. For communists, Kneecap isn't just a band – they're comrades in the fight.

Socialist Voice ★



# What I saw in Xizang

Arnold August

**In 2023, I had the honour of visiting China's Xizang Autonomous Region (Tibet) as part of a cohort of scholars and journalists from the Americas, Europe, and Australasia. I am deeply grateful for the invitation. There are various reports from the ground I can share, and this is one of them.**

As someone born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, I have a profound appreciation for issues of language, identity, and cultural preservation. This background made me particularly sensitive to what I observed in Xizang.

I am deeply interested in how China strives to integrate the most dynamic aspects of religious and cultural features into its policies and actions. This applies locally to Buddhism in Xizang. Despite my extensive education and studies in language and culture, the sharp contrast between US-led misinformation and the reality I witnessed was so evident that I was genuinely bewildered at every turn.

I am confronted with an overwhelming amount of misinformation in the West regarding Xizang, primarily centred on two issues: culture (including religion) and language. The discrepancy between the falsehoods and the reality I saw firsthand was shocking. It is outrageous to see such blatant deception.

My visit to the heart of Lhasa's old town was a powerful reminder of China's unique experiment in merging language and culture with modernity while safeguarding traditional practices. You have to "see it to believe it."

However, when immersed in Lhasa, the phrase truly applies. Interacting with Tibetans, I observed most in traditional attire, numerous monks in their religious robes walking or praying, traditional Tibetan architecture alongside modern malls, children rollerblading, families enjoying an amusement park, and some locals approaching us to practice their English and satisfy their curiosity.

Lhasa offers a wealth of content to explore. For example, we visited Jokhang Temple, notable for its traditional Tibetan architecture. It houses the Gelug school monastery, the most recent of Tibet's important Buddhist schools, where the primary language of teaching is Tibetan.

The visit to Potala Palace, which overlooks Lhasa, offers another perspective on Tibetan Buddhism. Its significant role not only in religion but also in the traditional political administration and thinking of Xizang was what impressed me most. The Palace contains nearly 700 murals, 10,000 painted scrolls, and an impressive collection of historical documents. If the Western narrative of Tibetan "suppression" were accurate, how could we explain China's dedication to the history of the region?

The same logic applies to the Tibetan language. At Xizang University, established in 1985 in Lhasa, courses are predominantly taught in Putonghua and Tibetan. With over 20,000 students, and a focus on local communities and cultures, Tibetan is not marginalised but an integral part of higher education and public life.



Xizang Museum. Photo: Baomi – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

A particularly impressive visit was to the Tibetan ancient documents research centre, which focused on the Phuri Manuscripts – China's most ancient and extensive collection of Tibetan literature. Discovered in 2002 in the rural village of Phuri, these manuscripts offer insights into a kingdom from the 13th and 14th centuries, depicting their environment, customs, social structures, and history.

If Western narratives of "cultural genocide" in Xizang had any basis, China would be actively erasing these cultural seeds to wipe out Tibetan memory. However, on the ground, we observed the opposite.

The Xizang Museum, completed in 1999, is the first large modern museum in the region, housing over 520,000 artifacts representing various dynastic periods. Its

collection includes volumes official documents, and gifts from emperors throughout history.

Eradicating a people's roots is a prerequisite for genocide; yet, under Chinese leadership, Tibetan culture has been well preserved.

When I thought I had seen it all, the highlight was the Tibetan Autonomous Region intangible cultural heritage preservation centre. Since 2012, over 400 million yuan (AU\$86 million) has been invested in protecting Tibetan intangible cultural heritage. It was a truly refreshing experience – an inspiring example of a proactive, well-funded effort.

To claim that a culture is being "erased" while its language is taught, religion practiced, and history displayed and studied is an untenable contradiction. It prompts

the question: Who really defines cultural survival?

Too often, Western perspectives project their anxieties and strategic narratives onto others.

By contrast, in Quebec – whose distinct cultural heritage dates back to 1618 – our music, film, journalism, novels, and poetry remain mere footnotes to Anglo-American dominance. Despite protective efforts, pressures to assimilate remain a concern.

In comparison, what I saw in Xizang was a genuine, well-funded, and systematic effort to preserve heritage.

In Xizang, I saw the truth – alive and thriving. My main message is to visit Xizang and see the stark contrast between fact and fiction.

Global Times 🇺🇸

## Tariff wars: A struggle between imperialist blocs

### Communist Party of Ireland statement

**The Communist Party of Ireland has pointed out on numerous occasions over the decades since the state joined the EEC/EU, that membership of this Imperialist bloc would result in an ongoing erosion of neutrality and would entail sacrificing the limited political and economic independence accepted by the Irish capitalist class in 1922. We also warned that reliance on transnational corporations would never develop a sustainable industrial base.**

This latest deal between the EU-USA in relation to tariffs further exposes the subservient nature of the Irish capitalist class as it puts the needs and interests of the EU ahead of the social, economic and political needs of the people of Ireland. We have

consistently challenged the lies and misinformation peddled by this and previous Irish governments who claimed that Ireland has an equal voice at the EU table.

This latest deal clearly exposes that this is not the case. The interests of the people of Ireland north and south of the British imposed border are not taken seriously. A cursory investigation of this recent deal clearly shows that the interests of US imperialism trumps the interests of the EU. The EU is not our "saviour" but rather is part of the problem.

The Irish state will have to contribute to the growing EU military budget to buy weapons from the US. The EU will have to contribute to the US\$750 billion (AU\$1.2 trillion) earmarked to buy expensive energy from the US.

On top of that, Irish exports to the US face the imposition of 15% tariffs. At the same time there is growing uncertainty regarding the transnational corporation pharmaceutical sector of about 90 companies, which employs in the region of 50,000 plus 20,000-30,000 downstream jobs.

It is time for a new direction outside of the structures and restrictions of the EU if we are to begin building a sustainable economy. We should look towards forging better trading and political relationships with the BRICS countries.

It is time to assert a more independent foreign and security policy, one that is based on anti-colonialism and equality between all states and peoples. Such a foreign policy is better suited to Ireland's history of resistance to colonial oppression than the

existing policy of subservience to the Nato/EU imperialist bloc.

The balance of economic and political power is shifting away from the old imperial centres like the EU/USA. However, as the NATO/EU proxy war in Ukraine and the NATO/EU supported Zionist genocide in Gaza demonstrates, they are still capable of unleashing unimaginable warfare on the peoples of the world.

Breaking free from the triple lock of imperialism which dominates Ireland, North and South, is not only in our national interest, it is also in the best interests of all those campaigning against the war plans of the NATO/EU bloc. 🇺🇸

## Argentina: Trump's Cuban 'worm'

**Last month Argentinians received a dose of explicit imperialism from the man who will be the new US ambassador to their country, Peter Lamelas. He is a multi-millionaire Cuban "worm" who, in his presentation to the US Senate, detailed what his mission in Argentina will be as Donald Trump's representative. He did so by presenting**

**himself as a kind of viceroy whose mission in these lands will be to tell the government, the legislative and judicial powers, and the rest of the social, trade union, and political sectors what each one must do and accept.**

His statements were condemned by vast political and social sectors, even those not known for their commitment to the people. It

is very difficult to relativise, much less justify, the statements of this despicable character, as the national government and its allies have done.

Yankee imperialism in its Trumpist version does not mince words and calls things by their name. In this sense, it considers Argentina its property, for which it has a servile and traitorous government that, in the name of "freedom," will do everything it

is ordered to do to its complete satisfaction.

We retired workers are clear that we can expect nothing good from the historical enemies of the working class, both domestic and foreign, and as Argentine history has taught us, they only guarantee us hunger, misery, and repression.

Therefore, we, the working people, must maximise our political and organisational capacity to

successfully confront them. In this sense, deepening unity in action is one of the determining conditions for stopping the offensive of Milei, Bullrich, and their government, and being able to promote the creation of an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist political alternative that will lead us to definitive independence.

Labor Today International 🇺🇸



# Japan: voters reject LDP politics

The momentum to oust Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru from his post as Liberal Democratic Party president is growing within the LDP. Following the ruling party's recent loss of parliamentary majority, it is being suggested that a change in leadership will help the LDP save face and maintain their grip on power.

At a press conference, Japanese Communist Party Secretariat Head Koike Akira said "The issue is not who should be the next LDP president, but that LDP-led politics must end."

While it is only natural that Prime Minister Ishiba should step down, Koike pointed out that many voters in the 20 July election had rejected LDP politics overall, such as its practice of maintaining slush funds, its incompetence in counteracting surging prices, and its diplomatic subservience to the United States.

In fact, the opinion poll Kyodo News conducted after the election shows that the approval rating for the Ishiba Cabinet declined to 22.9%, down almost ten points. Asked the question, "what kind of government is desirable?" 53.6% of respondents answered, "an opposition-led government" or "a new government formed through political realignment". On the other hand, only 13.1% favoured "the current LDP-Komei government", while 28 % supported "a government formed by the LDP-Komei coalition and some opposition parties".

Koike said, "The question that is being raised to the opposition parties is whether to end LDP politics, help LDP politics, or push Japanese politics in a xenophobic direction."

Japan Press Weekly

# Israeli army violates Syrian sovereignty

As confirmed by Israeli military spokesman, Avichay Adraee, through his social media account, IDF army forces have simultaneously raided four sectors of Syria, confiscating weapons and military equipment, and interrogating several residents on accusations of arms trafficking.

The action was condemned by the Syrian authorities, who

denounced the repetition of such violations by Israel as part of a policy of systematic aggression that threatens regional stability and violates international law.

Damascus has repeatedly called upon the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to take firm action to stop Israel's continued violations of Syria's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Despite statements by the new Syrian government, in

office since December 2024, stating that its country does not pose any threat to the Israeli state, Tel Aviv has intensified its attacks, both land and air, on Syrian soil.

These attacks have resulted in civilian casualties and considerable material damage, including the destruction of military installations, vehicles, weapons depots, and ammunition.

Prensa Latina



## Global Briefs

**Brazil:** President Lula da Silva has condemned US sanctions against Federal Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes as blatant interference in Brazil's justice system. The sanctions, announced by the US Treasury, accused de Moraes of carrying out an "oppressive campaign," naming right-wing former president, US ally, and mini-Trump Jair Bolsonaro as a victim. Among the charges against Bolsonaro are allegations that he attempted to overthrow Brazilian democracy and the Lula government in a coup. The Trump administration has also imposed a punitive tariff of 50% on all domestic products exported to the US. Recent surveys indicate that the majority of Brazilians oppose the US sanctions, while Lula's approval rating has improved.

**Israel:** The Peace Partnership, formed in December 2023 as a coalition of more than 60 Israeli and Palestinian organisations, conducted the largest joint Jewish-Arab/Palestinian demonstration since 7 October in response to the worsening starvation and genocide in Gaza. The Communist Party of Israel and other members of the Hadash coalition attended, as well as more than 10,000 Arabs and Jews from across Israel. Rally organisers say that police tried to interfere with the event, confiscating flags, posters, and banners. More than 900,000 children in Gaza are suffering from hunger.

**Argentina:** President Javier Milei has vetoed laws passed in July increasing pension and disability funds. Congress will decide whether to support the vetoes or uphold the laws, requiring a two-thirds majority in both the upper and lower houses to overturn the presidential decision. Milei's threat to veto the laws predates their passing, as he argues that they go against his goal of a fiscal surplus. Pensions and disability supports have been the subjects of several protests demanding an end to Milei's ongoing scheme of public spending cuts and privatisation. Milei has blamed the laws for the weakening of the Argentine peso, which he has also blamed on a conspiracy between local banks, the opposition, and his own vice president, who he labelled a "traitor."

**India:** India and the Philippines are reportedly set to launch joint naval patrols of the South China Sea. The move has been seen by some US media outlets as overt support for the US-Philippines position on the South China Sea. Chinese media and military experts have suggested that the move is an attempt by India to encourage purchases of its arms exports, including by Manila. The Philippines is a prominent buyer of Indian military equipment. The Philippines has been increasing military ties with India, the US, Japan, and Australia.

**South Africa:** Sindisiwe Chikunga, South Africa's Women, Youth and Persons with Disability Minister, has urged that gender equality is a necessary element of building a resilient economy. Chikunga said at the official launch of Women's Month 2025 held in Johannesburg that "no economy can be truly resilient for all when half of its population is economically marginalised." South Africa's government has announced multiple plans and reforms set to strengthen the advancement of gender equality over the next five years. Chikunga has called for new indicators of economic development as part of these plans, including indicators which recognise both paid and unpaid care work which is often unaccounted for. Chikunga has also emphasised that the advancement of women's financial inclusion must look beyond access to basic banking services.

Adelaide



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# China's masterstroke: BRICS against US oppression

Shane Cowl

Behind closed doors in Beijing, a quiet financial transformation is unfolding. China, the undisputed heavyweight of the BRICS alliance, is engineering an audacious challenge to the US-led global financial order. The goal? To dismantle the Petrodollar's dominance, neutralise Western sanctions, and rewrite the rules of global trade – all through BRICS unity.

This is a lot more than just economic competition. China is winning against two instruments of US power.

The SWIFT System is America's financial weapon. For decades, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) has been the backbone of global finance, enabling seamless cross-border transactions. It has also served as a tool of US coercion. When Washington wants to isolate a nation such as Iran, Russia, or Venezuela, for example – it simply cuts them off from SWIFT, crippling their economies overnight.

China has taken note. It refuses to be next.

The Petrodollar system was built for US supremacy. Born from a secret 1974 deal between the USA and Saudi Arabia, it ensures that oil is traded exclusively in dollars. This guarantees global demand for the greenback, allowing America to print money without consequence and enforce its geopolitical will.

But China, the world's largest

oil importer, is no longer willing to play by these rules.

## BRICS COUNTERSTRIKE

While BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and others) presents itself as a collective, Beijing is the undisputed architect of its financial rebellion. Key moves include:

### • The Yuan-Petrodollar Endgame

◦ In 2023, China convinced Saudi Arabia to accept yuan for oil deals – a direct assault on the Petrodollar.

◦ Russia, already under Western sanctions, now sells 90% of its oil and gas in yuan or rubles.

◦ India, despite US pressure, has begun settling Russian oil purchases in yuan.

### • The New Development Bank (NDB):

◦ It's a multilateral lender, but the NDB is de facto controlled by Beijing, with China holding the largest voting share. The bank funds infrastructure projects across the Global South.

### • Digital Yuan: The ultimate sanctions-buster

◦ China's central bank digital currency (CBDC) is already being used in cross-border BRICS trade.

◦ Unlike SWIFT, digital yuan transactions bypass US oversight entirely.

While BRICS has yet to officially announce a SWIFT alternative, China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) is already



Image: KeldBach – deviantart.com (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0)

operational. Launched in 2015, CIPS processes yuan-denominated transactions, offering a sanctions-proof alternative for nations wary of US financial surveillance. It's often overlooked in Western media.

Sources within the People's Bank of China (PBOC) confirm that CIPS is being quietly expanded to accommodate BRICS members, with plans to integrate Russia's SPFS and India's UPI in the coming years.

Why quietly. Why so many details not discussed? The answer is simple, the possibility of US sabotage.

A former PBOC official, speak-

ing anonymously, claimed that the moment BRICS announces a functional SWIFT alternative, the US will act. They've done it before – look at Huawei. "We're building silently until the system is too big to fail."

Washington is already reacting. In 2024, the US Treasury blacklisted several Chinese banks for facilitating sanctions evasion. Meanwhile, SWIFT has rolled out upgrades to retain its monopoly.

The stakes are high for the BRICS nations. A future in which the US doesn't hold the whip hand beckons. If China succeeds the Petrodollar crumbles; Oil traded in yuan weakens dollar demand,

threatening US economic supremacy. Sanctions will lose their bite as nations like Iran and Russia escape US financial blockades.

A new financial order is emerging in which Washington doesn't set the rules.

Failure means isolation – a fate China is determined to avoid.

This is not just about BRICS; This is about China's rise as a new and very different financial superpower. While the West remains fixated on military conflicts, Beijing is waging a bloodless revolution – one transaction at a time.

The question is no longer if the US dollar will be dethroned, but when. ✨

## Bengali in Modi's India: Branded, Bullied, Betrayed

Sandip Chakraborty

On a sweltering Saturday morning in Sargulli village, Odisha, 56-year-old Gitarani Sarkar opened her front door to what should have been an ordinary knock. But what followed was anything but ordinary. It was a State-sponsored interrogation of identity. The visitor? Not a neighbour, not a census worker, but police officers sent, it seems, to question whether she was really Indian.

In today's India – shaped, shrivelled, and segmented by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – being Bengali is increasingly being seen as a burden, a badge of suspicion, or worse, a border that must be policed.

"They asked me who I was, where I was born, and if I was really Indian," Gitarani recounts, her voice breaking. "I've lived here for 30 years – no one ever asked me this before Modi came to power," she added.

Married into an Odia family for over three decades, raising children, paying taxes, voting, contributing to society – none of it matters in BJP's version of "New India." What matters now is your surname, your birthplace, and your language. Gitarani's crime? She was born in West Bengal and

speaks Bengali – a language now viewed with hostility in certain BJP-dominated corridors of power.

### A CALCULATED CAMPAIGN OF FEAR?

Gitarani is not alone. Across Raigarh and other districts in Odisha, Bengali-speaking families – many settled for generations – are being asked to "prove" that they belong. Quietly, methodically, this government is transforming internal migration into internal surveillance. Identity, once a lived experience, is now a bureaucratic trap.

"Today it's Gitaranidi. Tomorrow, it could be me," says a local teacher, afraid to reveal her name. "We came here for a life, not to be branded outsiders."

This isn't random, but part of a larger, sinister strategy. From Assam's NRC (National Register of Citizens) to the communal double standards of the CAA Citizenship Amendment Act, the ruling BJP has weaponised identity and turned Bengalness – especially outside Bengal – into a political liability.

### SHARED HISTORY TO STRATEGIC DIVISION

Eastern India once shared culture,

migration, and mutual respect across Bengal, Assam, and Odisha. Today, under the BJP's divisive nationalism, those fluid borders have hardened into lines of suspicion. Bengali identity is no longer just linguistic – it's being reduced to a codeword for "illegal migrant," "infiltrator," or "foreigner."

"This dangerous conflation – Bengali equals Bangladeshi – is manufactured," says sociologist Rina Bhattacharya. "It's inaccurate, it's politically driven, and it's tearing the social fabric apart," she adds.

Especially targeted are Hindu Bengalis who migrated decades ago – the very people the BJP claims the CAA was meant to protect. Now, even they are being asked to produce 50-year-old papers they never thought they'd need. Particularly vulnerable are women. Women, such as Gitarani, who changed homes due to marriage, have no ancestral land records or birth certificates at hand. Under the BJP's regime, Aadhaar, voter ID, and bank accounts suddenly "aren't enough."

This BJP-led witch hunt doesn't just question nationality – it punishes womanhood. Gitarani, like countless others, is caught in a bureaucratic hell with no exit route.

"What more do I need to be Indian?" she pleads. Her answer should be obvious – but in BJP's India, it isn't.

### OBSESSED WITH PROVING LOYALTY

This is not governance. It is gaslighting. The BJP's obsession with "loyalty" and "authenticity" has narrowed Indian identity into something brittle and bloodless. Those

who speak Bengali are expected to carry documents, like refugees, even when they are native-born citizens.

The CAA, far from being a shield for persecuted Hindus, has become a sword used selectively. If you are Bengali, you are suspect. If you are Muslim and Bengali, you are doomed. If you are a woman, you are unheard.

"Being Bengali is not a crime," says activist-lawyer Sumana Sinha, adding "But the BJP is making it one – through policy, propaganda, and persecution."

### DIVIDING THE NATION, ONE KNOCK AT A TIME

What does it mean to be Indian in 2025 under BJP rule? If you're Bengali, it now means being asked for your birth certificate at your doorstep. It means speaking your mother tongue with caution. It means being doubted even after decades of contribution to this country.

Gitarani Sarkar thought she had found her home in Odisha. But like millions of Bengalis living outside West Bengal, she is now forced to live under a cloud of manufactured suspicion – courtesy of a government that thrives on fear and division.

In Modi's India, being Bengali has become a burden. But the real burden is being carried by the 'Idea of India' itself – eroded, divided, and distorted by a party that no longer represents the people, but rules by pitting them against one another.

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# United States fines company for sending food to Cuba

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), of the US Treasury Department, imposed a fine of US \$608,825 on the company Key Holding, LLC, owner of Key Logistics Colombia S.A.S., for making 36 shipments to Cuba between 2022 and 2023, valued at more than three million dollars. Most of these shipments consisted of foodstuffs, along with oil well machinery, towels, and electric forage choppers.

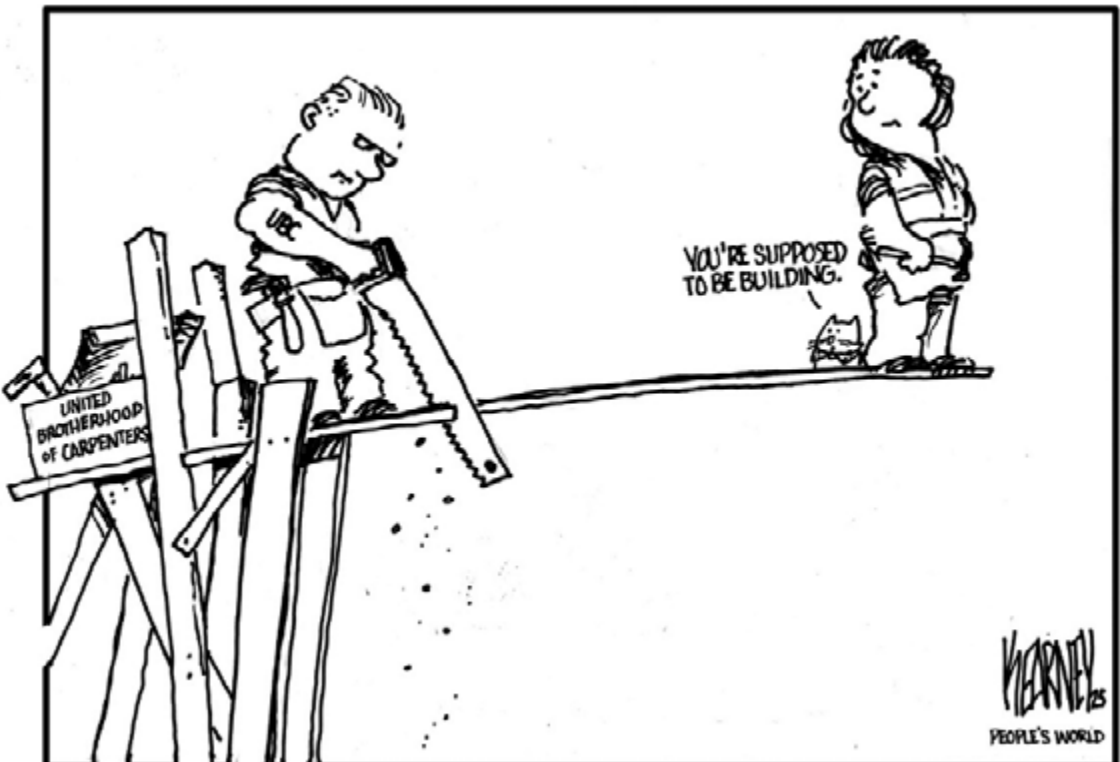
The case – disseminated by media financed by US government agencies such as USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy or NED – is presented as

a “violation of the embargo,” deliberately omitting that the US economic blockade against Cuba is a criminal policy that directly affects the Cuban people, preventing the entry of medicines, food, and essential resources.

Once again, OFAC punishes even the shipment of food, which shows that the real objective is to suffocate Cuba and generate suffering among its people.

The blockade is not a simple “bilateral measure,” it is a system of extraterritorial coercion that persecutes any company or country that tries to trade with Cuba.

Granma ✳



The US United Brotherhood of Carpenters is scrapping its two-decade-old women's committee. The decision was made to avoid legal action by the Trump administration. Carpenters general president Douglas McCarron wrote in a 5 May memo to district vice presidents.

“As you are well aware, current executive orders and policies targeting identity-based initiatives put our program ‘Sisters in the Brotherhood’ and its structure at legal risk,” McCarron wrote. He said a “realignment” is necessary as a result. The memo didn’t say what the legal risk is.

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### ‘Sexually transmitted debt’

Ann Kayis-Kumar, the founding director of UNSW Tax and Business Advisory Clinic, deals with victim-survivors of financial abuse. She has raised concerns that Director Penalty Notices (DPNs) are “unwittingly capturing people, survivors of abuse, and there are not appropriate safeguards in place.” DPNs are a means of collecting debt used by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). “We think that the reason for the DPN numbers being as high as they are is because they are, in effect, sexually transmitted tax debts,” she says. Kayis-Kumar reports that in the past year the percentage of women seeking financial advice from the Clinic who have experienced family or domestic violence has risen from 65% to over 80%. These debts come from business debts, bankruptcy, corporate directorships and director penalty notices.

“The perpetrators of violence can effectively weaponise the tax system by placing tax debts solely in the names of former partners, often because they have made them directors of companies or through family businesses operating through partnerships or trusts,” Kayis-Kumar says. Women experiencing coercive control may have no control or involvement in financial affairs. They are denied access to financial accounts, are unable to control businesses that might be in their name. Where massive tax debts build up, they have no idea that these debts exist, let alone that they will be deemed to have responsibility. As a result when victim-survivors flee abusive relationships they can suddenly be hit with massive tax and other debts not of their making. Australian tax law is inflexible, requiring victims pay tax on their “share” of a family partnership’s income or the whole of a debt incurred in their name.

Economic abuse is all too common with one in six women and one in 13 men having experienced economic abuse by an intimate partner. It occurs in nearly all domestic and family violence cases. The average tax debt of those approaching the Clinic for assistance is around \$90,000. This can result in debilitating financial burdens, exhausted savings, insecure housing, and prolonged economic instability, well after abusive relationships end. In some cases women resort to going back into abusive relationships.

Financial counsellors and the Tax Ombudsman have called for the ATO to take a more compassionate and understanding approach. At present legislation restricts the discretionary powers of the ATO in waiving debt in such instances on compassionate grounds although it lets big business off the hook. The counsellors and the Ombudsman are calling on the government to legislate provisions for the ATO to have the freedom to waive debts in cases of victims of financial abuse. When victims of financial abuse, especially those fleeing domestic and family violence, suddenly become aware they are liable for tax debts it can have serious consequences – mentally and financially.

After a lull during the peak of the COVID pandemic, the ATO is increasingly issuing garnishee notices that give it the authority to take money directly from people’s bank accounts. It is also reporting alleged business debts to credit agencies, which then make it impossible for victim-survivors to access credit.

The Ombudsman has a responsibility to review and make recommendations on systemic issues to improve tax administration and give advice to the government and Parliament. The government should heed its advice and legislate to prevent any more victim-survivors being hit with previously unknown tax debts for which they played no part in accumulating.

“Legislative reform to shift tax liability from abuse survivors to perpetrators is the key to helping solve the problem,” Kayis-Kumar says.

For information and advice about family and intimate partner violence contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).



# MUA Solidarity with Palestinians

**The Maritime Union of Australia expresses its deepest alarm at the catastrophic situation in Gaza and across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.**

We join our comrades throughout the Australian trade union movement and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in issuing this statement in accordance with international law and based on the findings of UN institutions, particularly the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as the testimony of our affiliated unions and their members.

This statement reinforces the ITF's position adopted at its 46th Congress in Marrakech in 2024, through Resolution A02: "The Situation in Palestine and Israel." In line with that resolution, we express our solidarity and support to our affiliates and their members and to all civilians and workers affected by the violence in Palestine and Israel.

## MASS KILLINGS, STARVATION

Since the end of the ceasefire on 18 March 2025, Israel's military offensive has killed thousands, the majority of them civilians. These operations have included the targeting of people queueing for food and attacks on hospitals, shelters, and aid convoys.

Food and aid distribution is increasingly being outsourced to the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) which operates outside international humanitarian standards, without UN oversight and in violation of international law. This undermines impartial humanitarian efforts and places lives at risk.

Israel's continued blockade of key border crossings and attacks on relief infrastructure constitute a deliberate policy of starvation. UN agencies and humanitarian organisations have warned of the risk of a state-sanctioned famine. While we welcome Israel's decision to support a one-week scale-up of aid, UN agencies and humanitarian organisations have made clear that this grossly insufficient of what is needed. The weaponisation of food, including the targeting of people seeking to survive, must be unequivocally condemned.

According to the UN and OHCHR, Israeli military operations in Gaza may constitute collective punishment – a clear violation of international humanitarian law. The scale and pattern of attacks on civilians, infrastructure and aid convoys are consistent with the characteristics of genocide.

Evacuation orders and forced displacement have reached new extremes. Over 1.7 million people have been displaced, many multiple times. UN experts warn that proposals to confine the population of Gaza into "closed zones" or "humanitarian islands" resemble a form of mass internment where displaced Palestinians would be held indefinitely under military control. Humanitarian legal experts and aid organisations have condemned these plans as an alarming escalation and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions.

The escalation is not limited to Gaza. In the West Bank, Israeli forces and settler militias continue to conduct violent raids, demolish homes and infrastructure and



March for Humanity – Sydney Harbour Bridge taken over by a rally for peace and justice in Gaza, 3 August 2025. Photo: MUA

forcibly displace residents – over 40,000 Palestinians since January 2025 alone.

## SILENCING OF ACCOUNTABILITY

We are alarmed by intensifying efforts to suppress accountability and silence those advocating for Palestinian rights. The imposition of sanctions by the United States on UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, following her report exposing the "economy of genocide" and the complicity of businesses in sustaining the war, is a direct assault on international legal mechanisms. Such reprisals target mechanisms of justice rather than the perpetrators of injustice.

At the same time, governments around the world are cracking down on pro-Palestinian speech, including targeting trade unionists, students and civil society groups.

"We are witnessing the deliberate starvation of a people," said MUA National Secretary and ITF President Paddy Crumlin. "Palestinians are being bombed, displaced and starved into submission. This is not collateral damage – it is a policy of inhumanity. Food has been weaponised, children, women, men, the elderly, even aid workers – people who have dedicated their lives to helping others – are dying from hunger and aid is being obstructed."

This crackdown has extended to peaceful humanitarian efforts. Civil society-led convoys, including the *Madleen* and *Handala*, were forcibly intercepted by Israeli forces in international waters, despite their publicly declared and lawful mission to deliver lifesaving aid to starving civilians in Gaza.

UN Special Rapporteurs have reaffirmed that the people of Gaza have the right to receive aid through their own territorial waters, and that Israel must not interfere with the freedom of navigation protected under

international law. They have made clear that Israel must adhere to international law and comply with orders from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. The interception of these missions violates international law, criminalises solidarity and only prolongs the denial of aid to Gaza's besieged population. The 17-year blockade must end.

"The global labour movement cannot look away. Our values demand that we speak out. We cannot accept a world where international law is trampled and starvation is being inflicted on civilians," said Paddy Crumlin.

## WORKERS TAKING ACTION

Transport workers are standing up. International Transport Workers Federation affiliated and non-affiliated dockworker unions have taken direct action to block weapons shipments to Israel. Meanwhile, transport workers including seafarers and aviation workers remain at risk: attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and strikes on Yemeni aircraft endanger maritime and aviation workers.

"These acts of solidarity uphold the core values of our movement, and we call for the protection of all transport workers and an immediate de-escalation of regional conflict," said Paddy Crumlin.

## THE WAY FORWARD: PEACE, JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We reiterate our calls for:

- An immediate and permanent ceasefire;
- The unconditional release of all hostages and prisoners held without due judicial process;
- An end to the illegal occupation of

Palestinian and Arab territories, occupied since 1967;

- Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and a two-state solution based on justice and peace;
- Full accountability for all international crimes, including through the International Criminal Court;
- An end to the impunity of companies profiting from the occupation and war;
- An immediate opening of all borders to enable convoys of food and humanitarian aid to all parts of Gaza;
- All states to implement the ICJ decisions without any delays.

We welcome the decision of the International Labour Conference to recognise Palestine as a non-member observer state at the International Labour Organization. The ITF also calls on countries to recognise the State of Palestine, as a meaningful and necessary step towards achieving a lasting peace through a two-state solution.

The MUA and the ITF fully endorse the UN's urgent call for immediate and decisive action to halt the ongoing atrocities. We urge the global trade union movement to mobilise all means at its disposal to hold companies to account and to ensure that they are not complicit in international and atrocity crimes, but instead uphold justice, human rights and international law.

"We must uphold international law, protect civilian life and push for a just resolution rooted in dignity and rights for all," said ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton. "Now is the time for global solidarity. The lives, dignity and future of the Palestinian people – and of peace in the region – depend on it." ★



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