

COP30

Ground zero of climate crisis

M Santos

“Climate change is no longer a threat of the future; it is a tragedy of the present,” said President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva addressing the first session of the international climate conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. “We live in an era in which obscurantists reject scientific evidence and attack institutions. It is time to deliver yet another defeat to denialism.”

“The truth is that we have failed to avoid an overshooting above 1.5°C in the next few years,” said UN chief António Guterres. “We don’t want to see the Amazon as a savannah. But that is a real risk if we don’t change course.”

A total of 193 countries, and the European Union, sent official representatives. One in 25 registered delegates were lobbyists for the fossil fuel sector. The USA was a noteworthy omission, having pulled out of the climate agreement.

COP30, held from 10-21 November, saw daily marches and protest actions denouncing large-scale projects with high environmental impact in the Amazon region and demanding faster action on emission reduction.

GREAT PEOPLE’S MARCH

The largest protest was the ‘Great People’s March’ on 16 November with thousands of indigenous groups, youth activists, environmental and other groups taking to the streets demanding justice, action, and representation as global warming nears the critical 1.5°C threshold.

- Slogans included:
- “We are not spectators. We are the solution. And we demand to be heard.”
 - “Climate justice cannot exist without social justice.”
 - “No future on a dead planet.”
 - “System change not climate change.”

NEW COMMITMENTS

The focus of COP30 was to be on new, stronger commitments for emission reductions by 2035 and on action to counter climate deniers and green washing.

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell warned of the “indisputable” dangers of inaction: “Ten years ago in Paris,

we were designing the future – a future that would clearly see the curve of emissions bend downwards,” he said referring to the agreement to attempt to limit the temperature rise this century at 1.5°C, relative to preindustrial levels.

At the commencement of the meeting, only around one third of countries had submitted new commitments.

According to the UN’s Environment Program’s *Emissions Gap Report 2025* the world is on track for 2.6°C of global warming if stronger commitments are not forthcoming.

More than 60 countries, members of the Powering Past Coal Alliance have pledged to phase out coal-burning power plants between 2025 and 2040. Australia is not one of them.

Funding remains a critical issue. The survival of Small Island States, including

those in the Pacific, depends on decisive action, including the accelerated phasing out of fossil fuels, and on climate adaptation – which requires significant funding.

Many are already experiencing rising oceans with salinisation of fresh water sources and loss of land and means of subsistence.

URGENCY

Guterres noted that it is inevitable that global heating will overshoot 1.5°C, starting, at the latest, in the early 2030s and that “the path to a liveable future gets steeper by the day.”

“1.5°C by the end of the century remains our North Star. And the science is clear: This goal is still within reach.”

“We have said it before, and we will keep saying it: We are running out of time,” warned Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare.

“A world at 2.6°C means global disaster,” Hare said, adding that it would likely trigger key tipping points such as the death of coral reefs, the transformation of the Amazon forests into grassland, the destabilising of ice sheets, and the collapse of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation affecting ocean currents and climate change.

The UN Environment Programme’s recent *Emissions Gap Report* warns that the US is actively shutting down offshore wind projects, rolling back renewable energy incentives, cutting curbs on carbon pollution, and expanding oil and gas production.

Amanda Pankará, from the Pankará people in Pernambuco, told *UN News* that COP30 provides a space where Indigenous issues can gain greater visibility.

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the UN may set targets,

but only movements create change

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Guardian

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Time to be adults about youth crime

Under new laws announced by Victoria's Allan Labor government, the slogan is now 'adult crime, adult time.' Children aged 14-17 years old could be sentenced to life in prison if found guilty of committing aggravated burglary or aggravated carjacking. Allan got some love from the Murdoch tabloids for this decision, and was rewarded with headlines like "facing the consequences" and "adult time for worst kid crime." It's clear that the tabloids and a lot of people like the policy and enjoy the prospect of kids who commit crime facing harsh consequences.

Victoria has a fair bit of crime, and any carjackings or home invasions are too many, but there's satisfying the momentary urge for vengeance and there's actually fixing the problem. Allan has chosen the former. It's like with bail laws. Activists put in years of hard work to get better bail laws after a number of Indigenous deaths in custody. In response to one dramatic and violent incident, the laws snapped back.

This is not just a Victorian topic. There's an appetite for revenge on kids around the country. The Northern Territory incarcerates children, especially Indigenous children at a furious pace. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services' (NATSILS) chair, Karly Warner, has said that if jailing children worked, the NT "would already be the safest place in the country." Indigenous kids make up 94% of the under-18 prison population there. As for New South Wales, and Queensland, the United Nations Subcommittee for the Prevention of torture had to cancel inspection visits because they were denied access to detention settings.

Children are different to adults. We all know this. That's why we don't let them drive, vote, drink, or join the military. As lawyer Michael Bradley said, "These restraints exist because we recognise that enough [children] are incapable of choosing well, thus justifying denying autonomy to all of them." Bradley argues that Allan's laws "will make some people feel better, but they will only make the real world worse." Adult time for adult crime is a slogan, not a policy. It's set up to fail. The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service has called it "equivalent to murder," to sentence a 14-17 year old to life imprisonment, as the Allan laws allow.

The laws are not about safety or justice. They are about vengeance. They're also about treating kids in isolation from their circumstances, as people who made bad choices and could easily have acted differently. The truth is none of us are individuals in isolation. We all have our own thoughts, but we all live in a society, surrounded by other people and given options that are different depending on our place in that society.

It's worth comparing the isolating and vindictive approach of the Allan government to socialist Cuba's response. In Cuba, the slogan is "if youth fail, we all fail." The minimum age for criminal responsibility is sixteen, the same as the voting age.

Cuba gets local committees to recruit retirees to provide guidance to kids who seem to be going off the rails. It has prevention commissions that work at a local level to see what can be done to give kids better choices and more support when they need it. When children commit crimes, a legal team meets with a group of experts to look at the youth's situation and decide how to best intervene.

Instead of chanting "adult crime, adult time," Allan's government could act like real adults and look for solutions, instead of slogans.

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Continued from page 1

"We would have much more to contribute if more Indigenous people were participating in these discussions. These demands are valid. We are claiming the right to land, the right to life ... Being here today, representing those who haven't had the opportunity to be here, reinforces our presence and responsibility."

INFORMATION INTEGRITY ON CLIMATE

The Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change declaration was adopted at the beginning of COP30. It commits signatories to addressing climate disinformation and promoting accurate, evidence-based information on climate issues at international, national and local levels, in line with international human rights law and the principles of the Paris Agreement.

At the time of writing the declaration had been endorsed by ten countries – Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Uruguay.

The Declaration calls on governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia to take concrete action to counter the growing impact of disinformation, misinformation, denialism and deliberate attacks on environmental journalists, defenders, scientists

and researchers that undermine climate action and threaten societal stability.

"Through the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change, governments and organisations are working together to fund research and action promoting information integrity on climate issues. Scientists and researchers should never fear telling the truth," Guterres said.

The Declaration calls on governments to ensure funds to research climate information integrity, especially in developing countries. It also urges the private sector to commit to information integrity in their business practices and ensure transparent, human-rights-responsible advertising practices that bolster information integrity and support reliable journalism.

At time of writing Australia had not signed the declaration.

Rachel Cleetus, senior policy director for the Climate and Energy Program at the US-based Union of Concerned Scientists said, "Years of grossly insufficient action from richer nations and continued climate deception and obstruction by fossil fuel interests are directly responsible for bringing us here."

"World leaders still have the power to act decisively to sharply rein in heat-trapping emissions and any other choice would be an unconscionable dereliction of their responsibility to humanity."

Time is running out. ★

Quote of the Week

" "Who doesn't want to lower emissions?
Everybody wants to lower emissions!"

Alleged Liberal 'moderate' Senator Janet Hume. 'Everybody' here does not include most of Janet's colleagues, given that her party has just agreed on a plan to subsidise coal production. If the Albanese government's actions are anything to go by, 'everybody' doesn't include Labor either.

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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Statement from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine



The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine firmly rejects the UN Security Council resolution concerning the Gaza Strip, considering it an attempt to impose a new form of trusteeship through the so-called “Peace Council,” which has been granted transitional and sovereign governing powers. This reproduces the occupation in a new form, marginalises the Palestinian role, and divests the United Nations of its frame of reference.

The resolution links the withdrawal of the occupation and the cessation of the war to the conditions set by the occupation itself. It ties reconstruction and aid to its will, deepens the separation between the West Bank and the Strip, and targets the role and responsibility of UNRWA towards the Palestinian refugees, the last manifestation of international commitment to their cause.

The Front emphasises that any formula that ignores the national will or grants the occupation or the United States the authority to decide the fate of the Strip is not binding on our people and is inapplicable. The administration of Gaza must be purely

Palestinian, and any international force must operate under a clear UN mandate with the exclusive task of protecting civilians, separation, and securing humanitarian corridors.

The Front rejects the clauses related to disarmament and condemns the characterisation of resistance as terrorism, considering this an emptying of our people’s legitimate right to defend itself. It views this as transforming the international force from one of protection and separation into an offensive force that provides cover for the occupation to continue its policies.

The Front warns that keeping the resolution without amendments and binding guarantees provides cover for the occupation to resume its aggression by new means. It calls on mediators and guarantors to act urgently to prevent its exploitation and the bypassing of our people’s rights to liberation and self-determination.

Our people, who have made continuous sacrifices, will not accept any formula that detracts from their sovereignty and will continue their struggle until they wrest their full freedom on their land.

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine



Dear Comrades in the Communist Party of Australia,

Warm revolutionary greetings,

On behalf of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and in the name of its comrades in the homeland and in the diaspora, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to your revolutionary party on the anniversary of its founding – a historic milestone in the struggle of the working class and socialist movement in Australia and worldwide.

The Democratic Front highly values your party’s long-standing commitment since 1920 to defending the rights of workers, opposing imperialism and racism, and supporting the struggles of peoples for freedom and social justice – foremost among them, the Palestinian people’s struggle to end the occupation and achieve their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

We take this occasion to express our deep appreciation for your principled and steadfast stance during the genocide war waged by Israel against our people in the Gaza Strip, and for the important role your party and comrades played in the popular, union, and political

mobilisations across Australia in solidarity with Palestine, in rejection of aggression, and in defense of human rights, freedom, and dignity. Your actions have embodied the true spirit of internationalist solidarity and the socialist values that unite our struggles.

We take pride in the bonds of friendship and solidarity between our two parties, and we look forward to strengthening them further in the common struggle against exploitation, imperialism, and domination – and for a world built on justice, equality, and peace.

Greetings to your militant party on its anniversary, and to all comrades who have carried the banner of the workers’ and international struggle across generations.

Glory to our shared internationalist struggle, Glory to the peoples resisting imperialism and exploitation,

Long live Palestinian-Australian friendship.

With sincere comradely regards,

**International Relations Department
Democratic Front for the
Liberation of Palestine
Palestine, 30 October 2025**

NSW: Upper house demands meaningful workers’ comp reform

The state government’s attempt to slash weekly support payments to traumatised workers has been sent packing by the Upper House, prompting fresh union calls to put dignity and compassion at the heart of any further reform efforts.

An attempt to hike the whole person impairment threshold at which a psychologically injured worker receives weekly income support from 15% to 28 per cent by 2029 has been rejected.

“The parliament has reflected the views of the community. It has told the government to put away its sledgehammer and rediscover compassion and dignity for traumatised and vulnerable workers,” said Mark Morey, Secretary of Unions NSW.

“This is a missed opportunity to reform the NSW workers’ compensation system to improve it for everyone involved, especially injured workers. Seeking to make it almost impossible for workers who sustain a psychological injury was simply not the right

approach and would have done nothing to return those workers back to work.”

Unions also commend the Upper House for rejecting other amendments to water down anti-bullying and harassment provisions which would have greatly restricted access to compensation.

The union movement is calling on the NSW government to include a new provision in the Bill when it goes to the lower house based on the Greenwich proposal to establish an expert panel, headed by the

Chief Psychiatrist, to develop an effective alternative to the current broken system.

Unions NSW and the broader movement commends those members of the NSW Parliament who maintained their principled opposition to any increase in the whole-person-impairment thresholds.

“Prevention of psychological injuries must be front of mind for any further reform efforts. That’s the genuine path to reforming workers compensation.”

Unions NSW 🇺🇸

NSW to reintroduce antiprotest move-on power

Paul Gregoire

The NSW government is using the decision by police to authorise a neo-Nazi protest as an excuse to reintroduce unconstitutional laws empowering police to issue move on directions at places of worship.

New South Wales Premier Chris Minns and attorney general Michael Daley have responded to the embarrassment of neo-Nazi groups having demonstrated outside of the state's parliament with the authorisation of the police force, by redrafting and reenacting the unconstitutional antiprotest move on law the NSW Supreme Court just struck down.

The state's chief lawmaker told the lower house on 11 November 2025, that two bills are to be tabled in order to deal with what is now being described as "the emerging neo-Nazi threat." One piece of legislation will contain a group of amendments to tweak current laws, while another will serve to remove a court-repealed move on power and reenact it as a revised law.

The recently struck-down police power to issue move on directions served to allow police to direct those rallying near a place of worship to go away. What 'near' meant was left to officer discretion. The law could be exercised even if protesters weren't obstructing worshippers, so police could move on activists for blocking people on a footpath. So, this was effectively an all-purpose power to shift most protests.

Minns told parliament that alongside the reformulated move on power that had been passed earlier this year, his government is also considering a prohibition on Nazi behaviour and speech, and the removal of a sunset clause relating to the offence of inciting racial hatred, which was controversially passed as a last minute addition in February, but didn't serve to prevent the Nazi rally.

So, NSW Labor is about to undertake a repeat of its mid-February legislative onslaught, which ultimately appeared to be measures passed that were helpless in the face of a neo-Nazi rally, especially when NSW police had considered it legitimate. Another clear outcome of the Nazi protest has been a growing understanding that the passing of laws won't prevent rising Nazism.

COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO NAZIS

"Legislation will be introduced to clarify the provision that was impugned earlier this year in the Supreme Court of New South Wales decision of Lees versus State of New South Wales, where the court declared that section 200(5) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act (NSW) (the LEPR) was constitutionally invalid," Daley told the house.

"The court considered that the purpose of the legislation, the purpose that we all enacted this legislation for, was still legitimate," the chief lawmaker added. "However, it found that the provision operated more broadly than was necessary to achieve its purpose as

it was not limited in the way it was drafted to conduct affecting persons accessing or attempting to leave a place of worship."

A broad sector of NSW civil society didn't consider the move on power legitimate, however. NSW Labor MLC Stephen Lawrence said at the time of the court decision that the law had been enacted under a dubious interpretation of a protest near a synagogue. In February, he explained the move on power could be used to move protesters with no relation to any nearby place of worship.

Daley said the law will avoid the unconstitutional nature of its predecessor, because "no-one deserves to be blocked, harassed or intimidated" whilst attending a church. What that has to do with neo-Nazis assembling outside of NSW parliament, while the building was shut over the weekend, isn't clear.

LAWS UPON LAWS

The government is also considering changes to the Summary Offences Act 1988 (NSW), in respect of the process that permits civilians to notify police of a plan to protest. 'White Australia' had submitted a detailed Form 1 to NSW police that involved legal advice. Deputy commissioner Peter Thurtell considered it, failed to oppose it and didn't inform the police commissioner about it.

White Australia had forewarned that its protest would be against the "Jewish Lobby," which it claims includes Zionist organisations, non-Zionist organisations and pro-Jewish groups but not the entire Jewish community. The Nazis' Form 1 argued that opposing "the Jewish Lobby" fails to breach the racial discrimination prohibition in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act.

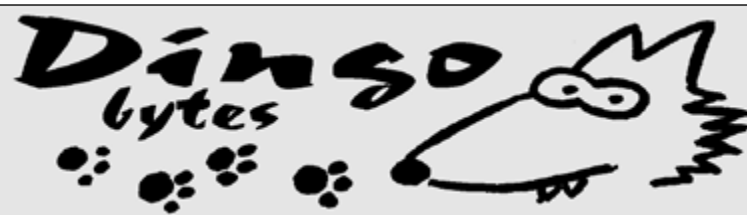
MAKING MULTICULTURALISM A PROBLEM

The premier said that the criminal laws he's been enacting in parliament that are related to hatred and places of worship are further spurred by civil society's desire to protect its multicultural community. It's a line that Minns has been repeatedly spinning over the last 12 months.

Past premiers Dominic Perrottet, Gladys Berejiklian and Mike Baird did not blame any rights-eroding laws that they passed on the multicultural and multi-faith nature of NSW society. Multicultural nations have existed across the planet for centuries. So, the need for an erosion of rights because Australia is not an ethnonationalist state, doesn't seem to stack up.

Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-chief executive Alex Rychin has suggested NSW police shouldn't be blamed for the neo-Nazi rally, but rather implied the ongoing pro-Palestinian rallies of the last 25 months were more so to blame, while Minns suggested the antisemitism of the neo-Nazi protest was somehow "let out of the bag" by pro-Palestinian forces and then "metastasised."

Sydney Criminal Lawyers (edited for space) ✳



In South Australia, more than 94 per cent of low-paid health support and disability support workers have voted to accept a historic wages deal from the Malinauskas government, after thousands took action across the state.

The voter turnout in the ballot saw almost 4,000 public sector workers cast a "yes" vote for the wages deal, representing the highest turnout for a vote on the agreement in more than a decade.

Since February, thousands of United Workers Union members took action in hospitals, wrote demands on Department of Human Services vans, signed petitions and protested loudly about issues they faced in metropolitan hospitals, regional health, aged care and disability support.

The offer features pay rises for the vast majority of workers of between 24% and 44% across the three-year period, and huge improvements to conditions including:

- Department of Human Services workers paid at Federal award rates or better.
- Sunday penalty rates of 175% for health support workers and 200% for disability support workers.
- Metropolitan hospital workers given \$2.50 a day car parking or free public transport.
- Backpayment of wage deals to at least July 1 this year, and in some cases backpayments to July 1, 2024.

The pay rises are seen as the largest public sector pay rises in Australian history, and address long-standing historical undervaluation of the health support and disability support workforces in South Australia.

The eight-month campaign was notable for vocal worker protests outside the offices of Disability Services Minister Nat Cook, Health Minister Chris Picton, former Treasurer Stephen Mullighan and Premier Peter Malinauskas.

United Workers Union National Public Sector Director and SA State Secretary Demi Pnevmatikos said: "Today we welcome an overwhelming vote to improve the wages, conditions and lives of thousands of South Australia's health support workers, disability support workers, aged care workers and early childhood educators.

"These are some of the lowest-paid workers in South Australia – wage increases like these are a big step to keeping the health, aged care and disability support services running."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Deakin University's wage theft. The National Tertiary Education Union welcomed Deakin University's pledge to backpay casual staff underpaid almost \$3 million, involving 440 staff affected by \$2.9 million in underpayments over eight years.

NTEU members have engaged in a long-running campaign including allegations of systemic underpayment of casual academics in the Fair Work Commission. The total figure is expected to rise beyond \$2.9 million as more staff come forward.

Deakin has previously acknowledged underpayments to sessional staff following union pressure and investigation into unlawful piece-rate-style payment practices for marking.

The latest Deakin revelations take the confirmed university wage theft tally at universities nationally to beyond \$284 million.

Universities have made provisions for a further \$168 million in underpayments, with the combined figure now more than \$450 million.

NTEU Deakin Branch President Professor Reece Walters said the announcement was a hard-won and long-overdue outcome. "This is a major victory for NTEU members at Deakin who have fought hard against wage theft over many years," he said.

"There's almost certainly more people affected than just this initial announcement so we'll be working hard to ensure every staff member past and present gets every cent they're owed.

"We're encouraging all casual Deakin staff who believe they may have been underpaid to contact the NTEU for advice and support."

NTEU Victoria Division Secretary Sarah Roberts said Victoria continues to be ground zero for university underpayments. "Once again we're seeing casual staff bearing the brunt of wage theft, which speaks volumes about the devastating impact of rampant casualisation across our universities," she said.

"The fact that casualised workers continue to be the primary victims of wage theft is a direct consequence of universities' deliberate strategies to maximise insecure employment."



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Victoria: 'can't get through' Help line fails as housing crisis deepens

Almost three quarters of Victorian renters seeking assistance are unable to access help, with shocking new data revealing just 29% of calls to the state's tenant support line were answered in October.

Analysis of Tenants Victoria's call data shows 2,682 people sought help through Tenants Victoria's phone lines last month, but only 776 received assistance – leaving more than 1,800 Victorians without the support they desperately needed.

The peak body for renters is calling on the Victorian government to invest \$21.3 million in next year's state budget to address what CEO Jennifer Beveridge describes as a crisis in renter support services.

"Every unanswered call represents a Victorian renter facing eviction, struggling with rent arrears, or dealing with unsafe living conditions," Beveridge said.

"When three quarters of people calling for help can't get through we're allowing preventable housing crises to escalate into homelessness."

The data reveals the scale of

demand, with the service receiving more than 6,700 incoming calls in October alone – averaging 160 calls seeking assistance each business day.

Despite efforts including call-backs to those who left messages, the vast majority of renters went without support.

Eviction notices for rent arrears have increased five-fold over the past two years, while Tenants Victoria's website recorded 1.34 million views from 558,400 unique visitors in 2024-25 – clear indicators of enormous demand for assistance.

"The Victorian government has already acknowledged that renters who could benefit from early intervention aren't getting help until they're in crisis – or missing out entirely," Beveridge said.

"A modest investment at the right time can prevent a complete breakdown of someone's housing situation. Instead, we're watching preventable crises unfold because services simply can't keep up with demand."

Just \$21.3 million in the 2026/27 budget would fund

expanded renter support services including multidisciplinary supports, early intervention programs, targeted assistance for vulnerable groups like older renters, and better access to information and advice.

"With rental market conditions expected to remain tough for the foreseeable future, this investment is essential," Beveridge said.

"Properly funding renter support services would be one of the most powerful and targeted cost-of-living measures the government could deliver for everyday Victorians doing it tough."

"Every day of delay means more Victorian families facing unnecessary eviction, more preventable homelessness, and more pressure on our already stretched crisis accommodation services."

Tenants Victoria is urging the Victorian government to prioritise renter support services in the upcoming state budget, warning that without immediate action, the situation will continue to deteriorate.

Tenants Victoria



Photo: Rexness – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

SA Housing Trust in crisis

South Australian public sector workers have rallied at SA Minister for Housing, Nick Champion's office in Smithfield, calling for fair pay and respect for the vital work they do to keep South Australians housed and supported.

Housing Trust officers face some of the most confronting and complex situations in the public sector – dealing daily with mental health crises, domestic abuse survivors, aggression, abuse, and vulnerable clients – yet their pay does not reflect the level of skill, risk, and responsibility their work demands.

A recent PSA survey of SA Housing Trust members indicates a department in crisis.

- Over 50% of respondents have felt unsafe working for Housing Trust in the last two years
- Over 75% of respondents say that there have been issues with the provision of services being provided to Housing Trust customers due to insufficient staffing levels and/or high workloads
- Over a quarter of respondents indicate that they are planning on leaving the Trust within the next 12 months.

"This workforce is on the frontline of South Australia's housing crisis," said PSA General Secretary Charlotte Watson.

"They deal with trauma, conflict, and crisis every single day – and they do it because they care about their clients and their community. But care doesn't pay the bills."

"Minister Champion recently stated that this government is about growing public housing, yet our members report a department in disarray, unable to recruit and retain staff."

"Ultimately it is the South Australian public who pay the price."

The PSA recently wrote to Champion asking for urgent action to address both critical safety concerns and the critical attraction and retention crisis in SA Housing Trust.

Many housing trust workers start on wages of just \$58,000 a year.

The rally is part of the ongoing campaign for a fair enterprise bargaining (EB) offer from the state government.

"Public sector workers are the backbone of essential community services," Watson said.

"If this government truly values safe

and stable housing for all South Australians, it must start by valuing the people who deliver it."

The PSA is calling on the government to come back to the table with a real offer that delivers:

- Fair pay that keeps pace with the cost of living.
- Safe staffing levels and working conditions.
- Recognition for the critical role public sector workers play in supporting our communities.

Elvira Karajkovic, Housing Officer and PSA Delegate said that at 30 she has already given up hope of owning a home. She'd like to start a family but says she can't do that on her wages.

Karajkovic said "I started in Housing SA when I was 23 and I never thought that I would have to look elsewhere for employment. The changes in this 7-year period have been detrimental to my mental health. Handing over the keys used to be the best part of the job. That is gone now. When I hand over keys, there is no pride. The properties are

not up to standard. We simply do not have the staff or the support to provide adequate living standards anymore. In my office, we went through a phase of six months, with only three staff members, to cover nearly 3,000 properties."

PSA delegate and Customer Service Officer Sarah Bougourd says she has seen "countless safety and service issues" in her three years at Housing SA. Her office has received multiple death threats from customers, and Bougourd says she herself has been sexually assaulted by a customer.

Bougourd says "My rent is almost 50% of my income. I cannot afford to go to the dentist for much needed dental work. My health is at risk. We have to leave the office in pairs for safety reasons, and we have dedicated security. This last year has been extremely stressful as we are already understaffed, and this has not helped in the slightest with retaining staff considering how low our pay is."

Public Service Association of SA

Tiwi Healing Centre to boost wellbeing on Country

Peter Farmer

A new healing centre will be built on the Tiwi Islands using \$3.1 million from the Aboriginals Benefit Account, a Commonwealth account which receives royalties from mines located on Aboriginal owned and controlled land in the Northern Territory.

An initiative of the Djurupuwu family group, the Djurupuwu Healing Centre will provide culturally grounded health and wellbeing services, designed and led by the Tiwi community.

The Yimpinari Aboriginal Corporation will manage the development of the centre on the Jessie River, located on the north coast of Melville Island.

The centre is intended to be a safe and culturally grounded space for Tiwi people to heal from a range of health concerns including alcohol and other drug use, mental health challenges, trauma, and physical illness.

It will offer a unique blend of Tiwi healing practices and western therapeutic approaches.

The Djurupuwu Healing Centre will be operated as a Tiwi-led, culturally informed facility, reinforcing the community's commitment to self-determination and healing on-Country.

The centre will offer:

- Culturally informed healing and recovery programs
- Cultural enrichment programs to strengthen identity and connection to Country
- Support for healthier lifestyle choices free from alcohol and other drugs
- Structured transition support to reconnect with community in positive ways.

The project is expected to create local jobs and training opportunities for Tiwi people, with community members involved in both the construction and operation of the centre.

The facility is expected to open in 2027.

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Exploiting professional musicians

Almost half the nation's musicians are earning less than \$15,000 a year in an industry where underpayment and broken contracts are rife, and the emergence of artificial intelligence is threatening the future viability of work.

Fresh data released by Musicians Australia, a division of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), has detailed the widespread exploitation of professional musicians by an industry that generates almost \$9 billion in revenue each year.

The survey of more than 300 musicians revealed that 44% reported earning less than \$250 per gig – the minimum pay benchmark set by MEAA – sparking calls for music companies, promoters, streaming services, and venues to pay up and support artists.

“These findings paint a clear picture: musicians are overworked, underpaid, and undervalued,” said MEAA Chief Executive Erin Madeley.

“This situation is unacceptable and untenable, made dramatically worse by generative artificial intelligence systems that are threatening to displace musicians by producing synthetic work based on theft of recordings and compositions.

“MEAA is calling on the music industry to pay up and provide fair wages, safe conditions, and sustainable careers for working musicians in Australia.”

According to the 2025 Musicians Australia survey, nearly half of all musicians earned less than \$15,000 a year, with 31% earning under \$6,900. A majority of gigs (59%) did not pay superannuation, and one in four performances violated contract terms.

Promisingly, however, 68% of musicians reported being paid for every gig they played, which was an increase from 53% in 2020.

The survey also identified widespread concerns about AI. Almost three-quarters of musicians described copyright protections as inadequate, while 85% were concerned about unauthorised licensing deals with AI companies.

MEAA Musicians Federal President and folk artist Kimberley Wheeler said Australia's musicians were highly skilled and experienced workers, with the survey confirming that more than 70% hold formal music qualifications.

“Despite their qualifications, experience, and significant contributions to the economy, the reality for most musicians is one of systemic exploitation, income insecurity, relentless unrewarded effort, and chronic undervaluation,” she said.

“The majority of survey respondents told us that they rely on their music to survive, meaning it is their primary source of income, yet they barely make enough to get by.”

Wheeler said the survey results underpinned the case for the \$250

minimum fee provision for performers, which has already been adopted by most state and territory governments for publicly funded live performances.

She called on commercial operations to do the same so that musicians could share in the profits generated.

“The music industry has been structured in such a way that it effectively steals from those at its very heart, and that's musicians.

“Whether it's live performance, recording, streaming, or now AI, musicians are being systematically ripped off.

“It's time for the big music and tech monopolies to pay up – pay up by paying minimum fees, pay up on streaming, and pay up when you're stealing the copyrighted materials of professional musicians.”

In addition to an extension of the \$250 minimum fee for commercial live performances, MEAA is calling for the industry to come to the table and negotiate a Code of Conduct for commercial live performances that includes minimum pay, while also addressing bullying, harassment, and exploitation.

MEAA is also urgently calling for stronger frameworks to prevent AI theft and unauthorised licensing, with regulation on AI to ensure control, compensation, and consent for creative and media workers.

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance



Photo: Alfred Nitsch – commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Union takes RMIT to court over \$1 million wage theft

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) has launched Federal Court action against RMIT University over allegations it underpaid student counsellors for at least a decade, with affected staff potentially owed more than \$1 million in stolen wages.

The case, filed in the Federal Circuit Court, centres on RMIT requiring counsellors to be psychologists or social workers who hold postgraduate degrees in psychology or social work while paying them at a lower classification reserved for undergraduate-qualified positions.

The test case brought on behalf of NTEU member and clinical psychologist Michael Swadling, who is seeking \$87,000 in underpayments since 2019, could open the door for 15 current counsellors and

additional former staff to recover years of stolen wages.

RMIT's student counselling team supports more than 2,000 students each year, with 30% of those students reporting thoughts of suicide/self-harm or experiencing family violence in 2023.

Despite the critical nature of this work, RMIT was the only university nationally requiring postgraduate qualifications while paying counsellors at the lower Level 7 rate instead of Level 8.

In May this year, RMIT moved counsellors to “senior counsellor” roles at the higher pay rate – effectively admitting the misclassification – but refused to provide backpay or properly recognise years of service in setting salaries.

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said the case exposed

how universities exploit their most vital workers.

“Here we have highly qualified mental health professionals responding to student crises and preventing tragedies, yet their employer has underpaid them for years,” she said.

“RMIT decided these counsellors needed postgraduate degrees to do their jobs safely and effectively, but chose to pocket the difference by classifying them incorrectly.”

“This is a betrayal of the crucial professional staff universities rely on to keep vulnerable students safe.”

NTEU Victoria Division Secretary Sarah Roberts said the case highlighted the broader crisis of professional staff exploitation.

“Mental health support has never been more critical on our campuses, yet the very people

providing this essential service have been deliberately undervalued and underpaid,” she said.

“If successful, this case will send a clear message to all universities that they must properly classify and pay thousands of professional staff doing complex, specialised work.”

NTEU member and delegate Michael Swadling, who has worked as a Student Counsellor at RMIT since 2015, said the fight was about respect as much as money.

“When you're supporting students in distress and responding to crises, it's hard not to feel devalued when the institution treats your role as something less. This case is about fairness, but it's also about respect for the people doing the work,” he said.

“It's embarrassing to realise that our university encourages students to pursue Masters programs

in Psychology and Social Work, and then undervalues those same qualifications in their own staff. The expertise they celebrate in the classroom is the same expertise they've underpaid in the workplace.

“Universities are in the business of teaching the importance of evidence-based mental health care – but they haven't applied that same respect to their own clinicians. You can't claim to champion wellbeing, and then shortchange the people providing it.”

The case adds to the mounting university wage theft scandal, with confirmed underpayments across the sector now exceeding \$284 million and provisions for a further \$168 million taking the total beyond \$450 million.

National Tertiary Education Union

ANZ cuts jobs in pursuit of profits

ANZ has posted a \$5.7 billion profit as a new Finance Sector Union (FSU) survey exposes soaring stress, anxiety, and physical health impacts among staff hit by 3,500 job cuts.

Interim survey results paint a picture of a workforce under extreme stress and uncertainty following CEO Nuno Matos's reckless decision to axe thousands of jobs.

Workers describe chaos, exhaustion and fear as they wait to learn if they will keep their jobs, with 80 per cent of workers saying they feel nervous or on edge nearly every day.

Over 60 per cent of the nearly 200 workers surveyed said they were experiencing the physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, stomach pain, and muscle tension.

Nearly half, 45 per cent, say the pressure at work has had a negative impact on their family or personal relationships.

One in three workers learnt their jobs were being cut through the media or social media. Many still don't know if they'll be affected.

Over 80 per cent said communication from executives hadn't been transparent or timely, and almost half (49 per cent) of those surveyed said they didn't feel safe to raise concerns without fear of consequences.

The FSU said the ANZ's pursuit of record profits had left a trail of harm and was further evidence cutting jobs is completely unjustified.

The union has commenced a dispute with ANZ regarding significant workplace health and safety concerns that have stemmed from these job cuts and how they have been handled.

Finance Sector Union National President Wendy Streets said:

“While the bank congratulates itself for raking in \$5.7 billion, thousands of its employees are living with anxiety, burnout and dread.

“We're hearing from people who can't sleep, who've developed panic attacks, and who dread going to work.

“ANZ's profits are up, but so is the human cost. The bank has a culture of uncertainty so severe it's making people sick.”

Anonymous testimonies from workers expose the depth of the crisis:

“Everything is chaos – roles are changing weekly, workloads are huge, and no one knows who will still have a job next month,” one worker said.

“Any care or concern for my wellbeing hasn't been considered at all, not even a text or email to ask if I'm okay,” said another.

“No worker should have to choose between their mental health and their job and yet that's exactly what ANZ's staff are facing.

“ANZ can afford to do better, it can afford to treat people with dignity. Instead, it's chosen silence, fear, and burnout as a business model.”

Finance Sector Union

Victorian government signs treaty with the First Peoples

Graham Holton

On 13 November the Victoria government signed into law a treaty with the First Peoples of Victoria. It is Australia's first state-wide treaty between a state government and its Indigenous Peoples. Treaty formally recognises past injustices, rejects the doctrine of *terra nullius*, establishes new institutions for representation, truth-telling and accountability, and sets forth a path for changing the relationship between the state and Indigenous peoples. The Victorian Premier, Jacinta Allan, said: "It is a chapter that is founded on truth, guided by respect and carried forward through partnership ... a partnership to build a stronger, fairer, more equal Victoria for everyone." The treaty will take effect on 12 December 2025.

Treaty establishes a permanent representative body through which First Peoples will have a formal voice in laws, policies, and decisions affecting them. It embeds truth-telling, accountability and healing mechanisms to address historical wrongs and to build future relations. The treaty gives formal mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples to participate in decision-making.

Rueben Berg (Co-Chair, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria) said: "Words are cheap, but these words now, in a Treaty, in legislation, ... these words cannot disappear." Berg's framing of Treaty as giving First Peoples the power to set their own course is central, that the "experts are Aboriginal people" underscores that it is not symbolic, but real decision-making by Indigenous communities. When Berg said "these words ... cannot disappear," he is stressing that embedding Treaty in legislation means its promises are binding and enduring.

Ngarra Murray (Co-Chair, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria) added that Treaty would not "divide Victoria, but complete it." Through Murray's "walking forward," Treaty is the start of a healing journey of

reconciling past injustices and building a foundation for future generations, "for our children ... our lives ... our waters."

Jill Gallagher (Gunditjmara woman, CEO, VACCHO, and former Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner) said: "I feel like my people have some hope now. ... I just want to encourage all Victorians to also feel that hope because this is our opportunity to bring us closer together and share our rich ancient culture with you." Gallagher added: "I have long dreamt of being part of a society where all Victorians, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can celebrate and enjoy the many benefits that come with belonging to one of the world's oldest living cultures ... I believe Treaty will make that dream a reality." It is not just symbolic, but a way to build "meaningful structural reform," to equip First Peoples' communities through health, education, and land to improve their outcomes.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder Uncle Andrew Gardiner was gracious, saying "We trust you to do the right thing for us, as we are Victorians too." It was a plea for respect, recognition, shared citizenship and an assertion of Indigenous identity within the broader Victorian community.

While Treaty is a major step forward, it does not give full veto power over government decisions to First Peoples. The real impact will depend on how the truth-telling body, accountability mechanisms, and the representative body will actually function and deliver. Any meaningful change will require shifts in attitudes and understanding across broader society and the education of the public on the state's true history.

The longevity and strength of Treaty framework may depend on future governments' challenges. While it is a landmark achievement, its success will depend on how the treaty's provisions are implemented in practice and whether they lead to improved outcomes on the ground.

The Victorian Liberal Party is still committed to tearing up the treaty if it wins the next state election. ❌

GREEN NOTES

An act of sabotage

Graham Holton

Brazil, the host nation of COP30, is facing criticism for approving new oil drilling off the Amazon River's mouth just before the start of the summit, sparking concern amongst environmentalists. The approval of exploratory drilling by Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, in an area 170 kilometres off the Amazonian coast, has been described as an "act of sabotage" that undermines both Brazil's credibility and the summit's agenda. This happened as Brazil was championing the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) initiatives at the summit. The world's largest climate conference is being held in Belém, with 50,000 delegates and observers hosted in the Amazonian city of 1.3 million.

This drilling approval has led to the criticism that Brazil is acting against its stated climate goals and undermining the summit it has just hosted. Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told world leaders: "Earth can no longer sustain the development model based on the intensive use of fossil fuels." Brazil is the world's eighth largest oil producer. If new deposits in the Amazon basin are confirmed, it's on the verge of an oil boom.

Many COP attendees find this a paradox. COP30 wants to tackle planet-warming fossil fuel emissions, and urge countries to move faster towards sustainable sources of energy. President Lula said, "Brazil is not afraid to discuss the energy transition," promising to use some of its oil revenues to fund it.

Environmentalists have described the timing as an "act of sabotage," highlighting the risk of irreparable cracks in Brazil's environmental policy, say *Forbes* and The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. President Lula said that while he is "in favour of a world one day that will not need any more fossil fuels," that moment has not yet arrived.

"It's very problematic," said Suely Araújo, public policy co-ordinator at Brazil's Climate Observatory. The government's "decision to increase this production in the middle of the climate crisis ... makes no sense." Araújo said, "It's a fragile region and they will have problems because even if they don't have accidents, the oil production always generates a kind of permanent pollution, a silent pollution." Off Brazil's northeastern coast is a 9,324 sq km fragile deepwater coral reef.

Petrobras, Brazil's national oil company has the rights to Block 59, the only offshore territory granted an exploratory licence to drill and confirm the size of the deep oil deposits. In June, the government awarded nineteen oil blocks in the Foz do Amazonas basin to Exxon Mobil, Chevron and a Chinese consortium. The deposits in Brazil's equatorial margin could be as much as 30 billion barrels of recoverable oil.

In October more than 50 Indigenous leaders in the Oiapoque area signed a letter opposing the oil development, demanding an official meeting with senior representatives of Petrobras. Chief Wagner Karipuna, says they were not consulted on the oil licence. "If it were to cause a leak, the water has no border. ... It will contaminate our river, our fish, the game, the birds, everything will suffer." Karipuna said, "The government is deluding us with false promises of job creation." Indigenous groups prepared a large protest at the COP30 to attract international attention and put pressure on Brazil.

Two years ago, at COP28 in Dubai, nearly 200 countries agreed to "transition away" from fossil fuels. Since then, multiple countries have reached record oil production. In Guyana, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela are in the process of increasing their oil exploration. As far as oil goes, COP30 seems to have failed before the summit began.



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Darling Harbour weapons expo: story of a campaign

Denis Doherty

The Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition (hereafter called the Expo) held from 4-6 November this year finally revealed in all its starkness how complicit the ALP is in relation to the genocide being committed in Gaza by Israel. The NSW Premier Chris Minns, Richard Marles Minister for Defence, and Pat Conroy the Minister for Defence Industry all indicated complete support for the Israeli arms companies and the other enablers of the genocide.

Richard Marles took the prize for the most uncaring comments about the weapons on display, describing them as spanning “the breadth of the beautiful, the menacing and the extremely cool.” The various drones, missiles, bombs and spying devices to be showcased “display the very best of human ingenuity.”

These hideous and desperate people are defending genocide. Defending genocide is the most despicable political position imaginable. When people speak out about this startling tragedy, they are attacked without mercy, using the full force, in this case, of the NSW police. The police used galloping horses and pepper spray to protect those people and companies that have profited from the genocide. They have no shame.

NSW premier Chris Minns has come under fire for saying he was “proud” and “delighted” to welcome weapons manufacturers, who are implicated in Israel’s genocide in Gaza, to the City of Sydney as part of the Indo-Pacific Weapons Exposition.

Conroy repeated the Albanese government line that they do not supply weapons; they only supply parts of weapons. They have commercial relations with Israel in which Australian military equipment is either bought or sent back for repair to Israel. With reference to Israeli arms companies supplying the ADF, Conroy added:

“We make no apology for getting the best possible equipment for the Australian Defence Force. We make no apology for making sure that our soldiers, sailors, and aviators have the best equipment to protect Australia’s interests, promote deterrence in our region, and that includes sourcing parts from companies throughout the world.”

Clearly the message is not getting through to the NSW Premier and the Australian government. Both governments are conniving with the Israeli government to assist in whatever way they can while pretending to care and making the most innocuous statements without imposing real sanctions on Israel.

After months of lobbying for the Australian government to ban this weapons expo and a similar time frame for the NSW government to take its logo off the Expo, they are called the “principal sponsor.” The NSW government wouldn’t tell us what this entails, but we assume that it means that the company running the Expo – the AMDA Foundation getting the use of the Halls in Darling Harbour for a very cheap price. We had to move into protest mode. A small group of people started organising the rally, and the Palestine Action Group and Students for Palestine were included. Those two groups



eventually moved out of the arrangement because they wanted to “blockade” the expo.

The remaining groups continued to organise and sent in a ‘schedule 1’ application to hold a rally. We applied to hold our rally near the International Conference Centre after marching a short distance from Sydney’s Chinese Gardens. The police did not answer our request. They finally sent their response on Saturday 1 November afternoon at 4.59 pm, just two days before the event, one of those days a Sunday. The decision blocked a major part of the Darling Harbour and restricted the peace to the area called Tumbalong Park, completely out of sight from the Exhibition or Conference Halls.

We put in a complaint into the police minister that the NSW police were sabotaging our protest. We also pointed out that the police’s role was to facilitate democracy not to obstruct it. On the day itself, the police were extremely violent. They used mounted police and a machine sending clouds of pepper spray over the crowd. Of course, we have since complained of police violence on that day. The NSW government’s approach to this arms bazaar is consistent with Premier Minn’s devotion to the Zionist cause.

The Expo and the Seapower conference associated with it were nothing but a celebration of weaponry and part of the rush to war that is gripping Australia thanks to the Albanese government.

We countered their spin with the UN report on *From economy of occupation to economy of genocide*, authored by Francesca Albanese. It states that “Israeli and international weapons manufacturers have developed increasingly effective systems to drive Palestinians off their land.” Albanese

names specific companies that are profiteering from the genocide. These are: Elbit Systems, Lockheed Martin, Leonardo S.p.A, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Boeing, BAE systems, and Northrop Grumman. All these companies were at the Indo Pacific Expo with no obstacle to their attendance or displays.

Hence, we could, and did, call the expo:

The Genocide Enablers Expo, suppliers of assassins Expo, the mashers of hospitals, schools and universities Expo, Killers of Doctors, Aid workers, and Journalists Expo.

Representatives from Wollongong, Labour Against War, several peace groups and political groups including the Communist Party of Australia spoke to the rally.

Our proudest boast is that the smug arms traders, navy personnel and government figures had to cower behind barricades and witness the violence of the NSW police.

In the past we have forced arms displays to go to other places. Who knows? Maybe a few more episodes like the one on 4 November at Darling Harbour will convince them to go elsewhere.

THE ANATOMY OF THE CAMPAIGN

In April 2025 Party members began to collect form letters on the Indo-Pacific Expo. Letters were sent to the Foreign Minister, PM, and Premier Chris Minns.

The NSW government wrote back. Here’s an excerpt:

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. Additionally, hosting the Expo attracts many visitors to the state, delivering economic benefit to the local tourism economy.

We contacted Arab and other community, peace and justice groups, reminding them of the great turnout on the Harbour Bridge, the rallies since then showing an upsurge in support for Gaza and Palestine. Finally we reminded them of the sheer horror of what Israel has been doing.

GOVERNMENT FIGURES INVOLVED

We’ve already mentioned Chris Minns and Richard Marles. Also involved from the NSW government was Analouck Chanthivong, Minister for Industry and Trade.

Chanthivong was the Minister responsible for the expo but was entirely unsympathetic to the ban position. He is of Cambodian background and grew up in Laos. We wasted no time in reminding him that the peace movement around the world combined to rid the world of landmines and cluster munitions because of their disastrous effect on Cambodians. Landmines and cluster bombs have killed 47,000 people in Cambodia, despite the war ending there decades ago. In 2024, 47 were killed by the Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). All this had no effect on his enthusiasm for the Indo Pacific Expo!

We also wrote to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. Neither bothered to reply. ✖

“Israeli and international weapons manufacturers have developed increasingly effective systems to drive Palestinians off their land.”

Let the Sudanese people walk toward peace

VJ Prashad

What is the reality on the ground in Sudan?

On 15 April 2023, war broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) – led by the head of the Transitional Military Council, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan – and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – led by Lieutenant General Mohamed ‘Hemedti’ Hamdan Dagalo. Since then, backed by various governments from outside of Sudan, the two sides have fought a terrible war of attrition in which civilians are the main victims.

It is impossible to say how many people have died, but clearly the death toll is significant. One estimate found that between April 2023 and June 2024 the number of casualties was as high as 150,000, and several crimes against humanity committed by both sides have already been documented by various human rights organisations.

At least 14.5 million Sudanese of the population of 51 million have been displaced. The people who live in the belt between El Fasher, North Darfur, and Kadugli, South Kordofan, are struggling from acute hunger and famine. A recent analysis by the UN’s Integrated Food Security Phase Classification found that around 21.2 million Sudanese – 45% of the population – face high levels of acute food insecurity, with 375,000 people across the country facing ‘catastrophic’ levels of hunger (i.e., on the brink of starvation).

Since the war began, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people sought refuge in El Fasher, then held largely by the SAF. Roughly 260,000 civilians were still there in October 2025 when the RSF broke the resistance, entered the city, and carried out a number of documented massacres.

Among those killed were 460 patients and their companions at the Saudi Maternity Hospital. The city’s fall has meant that the RSF is now largely in control of the vast province of Darfur, while the SAF holds much of eastern Sudan – including Port Sudan, the country’s access to the sea and international trade – as well as the capital city of Khartoum.

There is no sign of de-escalation at present.

WHY ARE THE SAF AND THE RSF FIGHTING?

No war of this scale has one simple cause. The political reason is straightforward: this is a counter-revolution against the 2019 popular uprising that succeeded in ousting President Omar al-Bashir, who governed from 1993 and whose

last years in power were marked by rising inflation and social crisis.

The left and popular forces behind the 2019 uprising – which included the Sudanese Communist Party, the National Consensus Forces, the Sudanese Professional Association, the Sudan Revolutionary Front, the Women of Sudanese Civic and Political Groups, and many local resistance and neighbourhood committees – forced the military to agree to oversee the transition to a civilian government.

With the assistance of the African Union, the Transitional Sovereignty Council was established, composed of five military and six civilian members. Abdalla Hamdok was appointed prime minister and judge Nemat Abdullah Khair chief justice, with al-Burhan and Hemedti on the council as well.

The military-civilian government wrecked the economy further by floating the currency and privatising the state, thereby making gold smuggling more lucrative and strengthening the RSF (this government also signed the Abraham Accords, which normalised relations with Israel). The policies of the military-civilian government exacerbated the conditions toward the showdown over power (control over the security state) and wealth (control over the gold trade).

Despite their roles on the council, al-Burhan and Hemedti attempted coups until succeeding in 2021. Having set aside the civilians, the two military leaders went after each other. The SAF officers sought to preserve their command over the state apparatus, which in 2019 absorbed 82% of the state’s budgetary resources (as confirmed by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in 2020).

They also moved to retain control of its enterprises, running more than 200 companies through entities such as the SAF-controlled Defence Industries System (estimated \$2 billion in annual revenue) and capturing a significant share of Sudan’s formal economy across mining, telecommunications, and import-export commodity trade.

The RSF – rooted in the Janja’wid (devils on horseback) militia – tried to leverage the autonomous war economy centralised around the Al Junaid Multi-Activities Corporation, which controls major gold-producing areas in Darfur and about half a dozen mining sites, including Jebel Amer.

Since 50–80% of Sudan’s overall gold production is smuggled (as of 2022) – mainly to the UAE – rather than officially exported, and since the RSF dominates production in western Sudan’s artisanal mining zones (which account for 80–85% of total production), the



Refugees crossing borders into South Sudan. Photo: EU/ECHO/Malini Morzaria – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

RSF captures huge sums from gold revenue every year (estimated at \$860 million from Darfur mines alone in 2024).

Beneath these political and material contests lie ecological pressures that compound the crisis. Part of the reason for the long conflict in Darfur has been the desiccation of the Sahel. For decades, erratic rainfall and heatwaves due to the climate catastrophe have expanded the Sahara Desert southward, making water resources a cause of conflict and sparking clashes between nomads and settled farmers.

Half of Sudan’s population now lives with acute food insecurity. The failure to create an economic plan for a population wracked by rapid changes in weather patterns – alongside the theft of resources by a small elite – leaves Sudan vulnerable to long-term conflict.

This is not just a war between two strong personalities, but a struggle over the transformation of resources and their plunder by outside powers. A ceasefire agreement is once more on the table, but the likelihood that it will be accepted or upheld is very low as long as resources remain the shining prize for the various armed groups.

POSSIBILITIES OF PEACE?

A path toward peace in Sudan would require six elements:

1. An immediate, monitored ceasefire that includes the creation of humanitarian corridors for the transit of food and medicines. These corridors would be under the leadership of the Resistance Committees, which have the

democratic credibility and networks to deliver aid directly to those in need.

2. An end to the war economy, specifically shutting down the gold and weapons pipelines. This would include imposing strict sanctions on the sale of weapons to and the purchase of gold from the UAE until it severs all relations with the RSF. Export controls at Port Sudan must be implemented as well.
3. The safe return of political exiles and the start of a process to rebuild political institutions under a civilian government elected or supported by the popular forces – mainly the Resistance Committees. The SAF must be stripped of its political power and economic assets and subjugated to the government. The RSF must be disarmed and demobilised.
4. The immediate reconstruction of Sudan’s higher judiciary to investigate and prosecute those responsible for atrocities.
5. The immediate creation of a process of accountability that includes the prosecution of warlords through a properly constituted court in Sudan.
6. The immediate reconstruction of Sudan’s planning commission and its ministry of finance to shift surplus from export enclaves toward public goods and social protections.

These six points elaborate upon the three pillars of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development’s AU-IGAD Joint Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan (2023). The difficulty with this roadmap – as with similar

proposals – is that it is dependent on donors, including actors that are implicated in the violence. For these six points to become a reality, outside powers must be pressured to end their backing of the SAF and the RSF. These include Egypt, the European Union, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the United States. Neither this roadmap nor the Jeddah channel – a Saudi-US mediation track launched in 2023 that focuses on short truces and humanitarian access – includes Sudanese civilian groups, least of all the Resistance Committees.

Though Sudan has produced its share of poets who sing of pain and suffering, let us end on a different note. In 1961, the communist poet Taj el-Sir el-Hassan (1935–2013) wrote *An Afro-Asian Song*, which begins by commemorating the Kosti massacre at Joudeh in 1956, when 194 striking peasants were suffocated to death while in police custody. But it is to the end of the song that we turn, the voice of the poet ringing above the gunfire:

In the heart of Africa I stand in the vanguard,
and as far as Bandung my sky is spreading.
The olive sapling is my shade and courtyard,
O my comrades:
O vanguard comrades, leading my people to glory,
your candles are soaking my heart in green light.
I’ll sing the closing stanza,
to my beloved land;
to my fellows in Asia;
to the Malaya,
and the vibrant Bandung.

Tricontinental Institute ✨

resources remain the shining prize for the various armed groups

email: editor@cpa.org.au



The Royal Commission laid most of the blame on the bridge designers, engineering firm Freeman Fox and Partners, which was of course deserved. The Milton Haven bridge in

What never gets mentioned is the effect on those families left behind. There were a lot of complaints after about the lack of counselling offered by John Holland. Tommy Watson of the CFMEU was quoted as saying "Nobody came and saw us, nobody came to our homes. There was no counselling for the widows, for people who were injured, for the survivors." The treatment the workmen on the bridge received in the aftermath drove Watson to become a union man.

Eileen Whitehead



editor@cpa.org.au

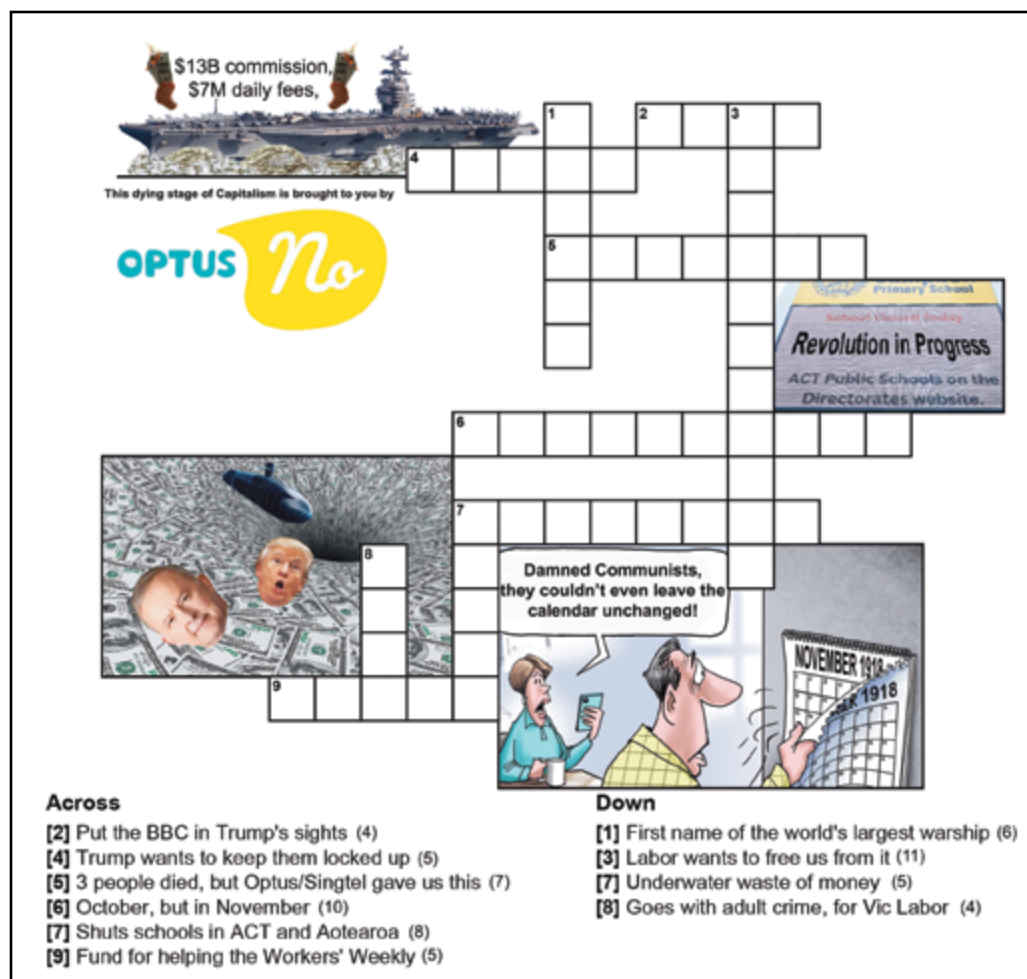
Reading Graham Holton's article about the West Gate Bridge tragedy (*Guardian* #2168, 27 October) reminded me of the horror that I felt on that day looking at the huge 40-foot

Graham Holton

At a time when the film *Spinal Tap II: The End Continues* seeks to milk more laughs from the stereotype of metal bands as reactionary morons, Chilean heavy metal defies the clichés associated with the genre by being deeply political, engaging with historical traumas, social inequalities, indigenous struggles, and contemporary political crises. ★



Deceus.



No genuine peace ‘without justice for the Palestinian people’ as UN Security Council approves Trump’s ‘stabilisation force’

Peter Farmer

The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution that endorses a ‘peace plan’ for Gaza put forward by United States President Donald Trump and a temporary international force in the enclave following two years of war.

Resolution 2803 (2025) received 13 votes in favour, and none against, with permanent members China and Russia abstaining.

The text welcomes the Comprehensive Plan announced by President Trump on 29 September. The first phase of the 20-point plan led to the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel days later.

TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The resolution also welcomes the establishment of a Board of Peace (BoP) “as a transitional administration” in Gaza that will coordinate reconstruction efforts.

It authorises the BoP to establish a temporary

International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in Gaza “to deploy under unified command acceptable to the BoP”.

Countries will contribute personnel to the force “in close consultation and cooperation” with Egypt and Israel.

NEW COURSE

US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz called the resolution a “significant step towards a stable Gaza that will be able to prosper and an environment that will allow Israel to live in security.”

He said the ISF “will stabilise the security environment, support the demilitarisation of Gaza, dismantle terrorist infrastructure, decommission weapons and maintain the safety of Palestinian civilians.”

Algerian Ambassador Amar Bendjama acknowledged the efforts undertaken by President Trump in advancing peace worldwide – but stressed that genuine peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved “without justice for the Palestinian people who have waited for decades for the establishment of their independent State.”

He noted that the text has received the support of Arab and Muslim countries and that “the Palestinian Authority at the highest level has openly welcomed the initiative.”

In explaining Russia’s decision to abstain, Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya said the Council was in essence “giving its blessing to a US initiative on the basis of Washington’s promises,” and “giving complete control over the Gaza Strip to the Board of Peace and the ISF, the modalities of which we know nothing about so far.”

VIOLATIONS

Since the ceasefire was declared, Israel has shot at civilians 88 times, raided residential areas beyond the “yellow line” 12 times, bombed Gaza 124 times, and demolished people’s properties on 52 occasions, according to *Al Jazeera*. Israel has reportedly killed at least 242 Palestinians and injured 622.

There is no news as yet as to whether or not Australia will join the ‘stabilisation force’, although it has been invited to take part. Australia will send a Defence Force liaison officer to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre in Israel. ★

The future of Australian horror

Graham Holton

While it participates in global trends, the future of Australian horror is local yet universally terrifying. It is moving away from simply imitating American or European models and is instead forging an identity based on sophisticated psychological exploration. It is creating unique hybrids that feel fresh and specifically Aussie.

The dominance of “Land Horror” and Ecological Terror is the most powerful and defining trend at present. The Australian landscape (ancient, vast, and indifferent) is the primary antagonist. Horror films from the US often bring evil into a safe suburban space, but Australian horror suggests the land was always hostile. The fear is not just of creatures in the landscape, but of the landscape itself: the isolation, the harsh climate, the sheer scale of the continent. The terror of the domestic landscape is seen in *The Babadook*. Historical trauma is embedded in the Tasmanian wilderness in *The Nightingale*, and the Outback as a post-apocalyptic wasteland is seen in *Cargo*. The family home as a decaying, monstrous entity is in *Relic*.

The future will see more stories that tap into specific, terrifying Australian environments: the dense, claustrophobic Daintree rainforests; the bleak, salt-caked Nullarbor Plain; and the sprawling, red desert interior. Climate change anxiety will fuel stories of vengeful nature, ancient ecosystems turning against invaders, and new “eco-horror” unique to the continent.

Reckoning with colonial history and Indigenous folklore is taking the most significant and culturally specific direction. Australian horror is becoming a powerful vehicle for confronting the nation’s violent colonial past and integrating the world’s oldest living culture.

Recently, some of the most exciting developments in Australia are projects led by Indigenous filmmakers, directly addressing the genocide, displacement, and ongoing trauma inflicted upon First Nations peoples. There’s a growing movement to tell stories using Indigenous creators and perspectives, bringing authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mythology to the screen. *The Nightingale* is a brutal, unflinching look at colonial violence. *The Dark Side of the Moon* (short film) and *The New Boy* touch on these themes. We will see a boom based on authentic “Dreamtime” stories and malevolent spirits like the Bunyip, Yowie, or Mimi. Rather than just using the monster because they need a monster, these films also

explore the cultural rules and warnings these stories embody. They will raise the question of ‘who “belongs” on the land and who is the “monster.”’

Following the global “elevated horror” trend is the rise of the “Aussie arthouse horror,” with a distinctly Australian sensibility. These films use the genre to explore profound themes of grief, family, and mental illness. They are character-driven, atmospheric, and psychologically complex, often slow-burns that prioritise dread over gore, using horror as a metaphor for internal turmoil.

In *The Babadook* it is grief and motherhood. In *Relic* it is dementia and the horror of inherited trauma, and in *Celia* it is a child’s perspective on political and social hysteria. This will continue to be Australia’s flagship on the international festival circuit. There will be more deeply personal, auteur-driven horror films that use the genre’s tools to dissect the Australian psyche, from suburban malaise to the “larrikin” facade cracking under pressure.

Australian filmmakers are brilliantly mashing horror with other classic Aussie genres, creating something fresh and unpredictable. One potent hybrid is the horror-western, with the Outback a perfect stand-in for the mythical, lawless American West, but with its own unique history and monsters. This is seen in *The Rover*, a dystopian thriller with strong horror elements, and in *Cargo*, it is a zombie apocalypse in the Outback. The excellent film *The Bloody Hell* (2021) is a perfect example of a heist-gone-wrong comedy-thriller that descends into backwoods horror. There will be more Outback Noirs with supernatural twists, survival horror that feels like *Wake in Fright* meets *The Hills Have Eyes*, and horror-comedies that leverage the unique, dry Aussie sense of humour.

While the outback is a powerful symbol, modern Australia also encounters fear in its large cities. Horror reflects the intense pressure of modern urban life: unaffordable housing, social isolation, and the dark side of the “Australian dream.” *Relic* uses the family home as a direct metaphor for the terror of generational debt and decay. *Talk to Me* explores suburban teen ennui and the desperate search for connection through a terrifying new social media-like trend. Future horror films will almost certainly centre on housing insecurity (the “haunted” investment property), immigrant experiences in multicultural suburbs, and the psychological toll of the “lucky country’s” intense economic pressures. ★



The survival of small island states depends on global decisions on adaptation and funding

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) Belém, Brazil, is a crucial platform for the small island states of the Pacific, whose territories, ways of life, and even survival are threatened by the advance of climate change.

The political decisions, financing pledges, and frameworks for adaptation, loss and damage under discussion at the summit could mean the difference between territorial survival and the need to abandon entire islands or accept costly coexistence measures.

The nations at the centre of this drama – Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and other Pacific atolls – are already experiencing the symptoms: more frequent coastal flooding, saltwater intrusion that ruins aquifers and farmland, accelerated erosion, and extreme weather events that destroy infrastructure and homes.

NASA research warned in 2024 that in the coming decades these places will face sea-level rise that will remain inevitable even if emissions are reduced, with estimates ranging from several centimetres to several dozen centimetres in the short term, further worsening the threats to habitability.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has highlighted in its reports the particular vulnerability of low-lying territories. Coral atolls and small islands are especially susceptible to changes in average sea level and regional variations in waves and storms, with direct implications for the physical continuity of communities.

In Tuvalu, with an average elevation of

just 2 metres (6.5 feet) above sea level, the ocean has risen by about 15 centimetres (6 inches) over the past three decades – roughly 1.5 times the global average – putting the habitability of its main atoll, Funafuti, at serious risk by 2050.

Most of Kiribati's 33 islands lie less than 2 meters above sea level and already suffer frequent flooding, saltwater intrusion into aquifers, and increasing damage to homes and agriculture.

The 2025 report from the Kiribati Bureau of Statistics noted that one in four families had been affected by natural disasters. In the Marshall Islands, a World Bank study estimated that 40% of buildings would be at risk and that 96% of the capital could experience frequent flooding if current sea-level trends continue.

A TRIPLE THREAT

Scientific projections reinforce the urgency of reaching agreements that include funding for adaptation, coastal protection measures, and mechanisms for compensation for irreversible damage.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also warns of a “triple threat”: sea-level rise, ocean warming, and acidification – a combination that amplifies ecological and socioeconomic risks across the region.

Politically, the presence and diplomatic weight of Pacific countries have grown at recent COPs; they are seeking not only financial compensation but also a global commitment to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to accelerate emissions reductions.



Marshall Islands, Majuro. Photo: Stefan Lins – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

At the same time, neighbouring countries with historical responsibility for emissions and economic capacity, such as Australia, have moved to support the Pacific's voice. Australia has not stopped opening coal and gas projects which lead to higher carbon emissions.

Canberra has formalised an ambitious proposal: to present a bid to host COP31 in 2026 in partnership with Pacific nations – a move that, if successful, would place the

region at the centre of the global climate debate and could facilitate more direct lines of support.

The diplomatic negotiations in Belém will offer indicators of whether the international community is willing to back, with resources and ambitious commitments, those who suffer most from a crisis they did not cause to the same extent.

Telesur ★

Taiwanese groups protest becoming Japanese militarism's 'sacrifice'

Some 34 groups on Taiwan have jointly issued a protest statement to sternly protest Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's provocative remarks regarding the Taiwan question, declaring that the people in Taiwan refuse to become sacrifices to Japanese militarism.

These groups, including the Labor Party of Taiwan and the Cross-Straits Peace and Development Forum, said in the protest statement that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi openly declared at the Diet meeting that the Taiwan question could constitute a

“survival-threatening situation” for Japan, to justify Japan's exercise of the right of collective self-defence and implied military intervention in the Taiwan Straits.

Takaichi's use of the so-called “Taiwan emergency” to push for a strategic upgrade is not for Taiwan's benefit, but to legitimise the militarism of Japanese right-wing groups. By elevating the Taiwan question into a matter of “survival-threatening situation” for Japan in her capacity as prime minister, Takaichi is effectively using state power to justify military action, a blatant provocation against existing China-Japan agreements and the

post-war order, according to the statement.

This brazen militaristic rhetoric openly interferes with China's internal affairs and gambles with the safety and lives of the people of Taiwan, gravely endangering peace across the Taiwan Straits and the region, and undermining post-war East Asian order, said the statement.

“We express our strongest protest against this, and the people in Taiwan refuse to be sacrificed for Japanese militarism and military adventurism.”

In the protest statement, the 34 groups lodged a stern protest and

put forward four major demands, which include that Takaichi must immediately retract her remarks on Taiwan and issue a public apology to the people in Taiwan, the people in Ryukyu (the islands of Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama, not far from Taiwan), and the countries of the region.

The groups urged the Japanese government to stop any military escalation in the name of the Taiwan Straits and cease hyping up the so-called “Taiwan emergency.”

These groups also demand that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities on Taiwan not tolerate, echo, or cooperate with

Japan's military ambitions or align with any external force pushing Taiwan toward war.

The groups urged the DPP authorities to restore cross-Straits dialogue on the legal basis of the one-China principle and establish a peace framework that ensures the safety of the people of Taiwan.

The protest statement also emphasised that Taiwan is not Japan's shield, nor the USA's outpost.

Global Times ★

Communist Jara wins Chile presidential election first round

Chilean Communist Jeannette Jara will contest a run-off for the country's presidency with far-right former lawmaker Jose Antonio Kast.

Jara, a former labour minister in President Gabriel Boric's left-wing government, won 27 per cent of the vote.

She wants to expand Chile's social safety net and tackle money-laundering and drug trafficking.

Jara warned: “It cost us so much to recover our democracy, and we don't want it to be put at risk today,” as she slammed the

“horrible campaign” waged on social media by far-right profiles linked to Kast.

An admirer of US President Donald Trump, Kast, who is opposed to abortion even for rape victims, and same-sex marriage, came second with nearly 24 per cent of the vote. His father was a Nazi Party member who fled de-nazification in Germany and his elder brother Miguel was a minister in Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship.

But Kast appears to be in pole position after nearly 70 per cent of votes went to right-wing candidates in the first round.

As neither contender received more than 50 per cent of the overall vote, the poll will go to a second round on 14 December.

Another 14 per cent of the votes went to Johannes Kaiser, a congressman and a former YouTube provocateur who campaigned as an even more right-wing alternative to Kast.

Chile's traditional right-wing coalition came fifth, with its candidate Evelyn Matthei winning 12.5 per cent of the vote.

Not all of the divided right is guaranteed to go to Kast. Several Kaiser and Matthei voters interviewed at polling stations

– including members of the LGBT community, women, and atheists – said they'd refuse to support Kast.

There were no other left-wing frontrunners, as all six parties in Chile's governing coalition threw their weight behind Jara.

It appeared that right-wing parties would hold a decisive majority in the 155-member lower house of Congress after the parliamentary elections.

Morning Star ★

OP-ED: Zohran Mamdani is not a win for the left



Zohran Mamdani at an anti-fascism rally, 2024. Photo: Bingjiefu He – creativecommons.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Maximus M

Zohran Mamdani has made shockwaves throughout the United States. He ran as a Democratic Socialist and won, first the primary and then the New York City Mayoral Election on 4 November, defeating disgraced former mayor Andrew Cuomo. Cuomo lost to Mamdani twice, first in the Democratic primary, then as an independent candidate in the mayoral election.

Who is Zohran Mamdani? Right-wing media has been proclaiming Mamdani as a communist, or at least a socialist extremist, but this couldn't be further from the truth. While Mamdani describes himself as a Democratic Socialist and calls for progressive reforms, such as rent freezes.

Hopes were high for him, boosted by his underdog status and the frosty attitude the Democrat establishment took with many senior Democrats refusing to endorse Mamdani or even to say if they would vote for him.

However, he shouldn't be regarded highly for the left. Despite Mamdani's anti-establishment credibility and progressive measures such as rent-freezes and free busses, Mamdani is operating within the constraints of the US political system. That system is totally captured by big capital. A case in point is billionaires. Mamdani proposed

to tax them (New York has the highest concentration of billionaires in the US) to pay for his progressive measures. However, he needs the governor's approval to do that and it's very unlikely the New York governor will give that approval.

Whether intentionally or not, Mamdani has confused the US working class, reestablishing faith into the Democratic Party, just like other progressives before him like Bernie Sanders or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The Democratic Party cannot be reformed from inside. It represents the same bourgeois interests as the Republican Party, but differs in strategy.

The aim for both parties is to support the wealthy at home, and US dominance abroad. Time after time again, the Democrats capitulate to the Republican Party, as seen in the recent government shutdown. There, the Democrats gave up without winning the health care tax credits that had been their goal.

Mamdani is definitely a progressive force within the US. He should have no problem with some of his campaign promises, as the mayor sets the rent guidelines and the city run-grocery plan is within the municipal authority. He can't stop ICE, the thuggish Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency which Trump has used to persecute immigrants, from operating in New York, but can provide more assistance for their victims.

Mamdani's other ambitious

campaign promises such as, free buses, cheaper electricity and higher taxes on the rich don't come under his mayoral authority. Implementing them would depend on state legislation and Democratic Governor, Kathy Hochul. Hochul has publicly opposed Zohran Mamdani's progressive policies. She has said that she has no plans to increase taxes because "I want to make sure high-net-worth people know we appreciated them." That's the true nature of the Democrat Party. It will never represent the workers.

Zohran Mamdani is only socialist in name. When it comes to actually existing socialism, Mamdani repeats the same talking points used by Republicans. He has called Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel a dictator, and takes the same line on Venezuelan President, Nicolás Maduro.

At a time when President Trump is threatening Venezuela with intervention, this matters.

Zohran Mamdani is progressive, and it's a good sign that New Yorkers elected him in the face of massive opposition from Trump and a large part of the Democrat establishment, but his winning the mayoral election will not save the American working class, and it's not a turning point for American socialism. ❌



Global Briefs

COLOMBIA: Colombian President Gustavo Petro has ordered the country's security forces to stop sharing intelligence with the United States until the Trump administration stops unprovoked strikes on alleged drug-traffickers in the Caribbean. Petro said that the military must immediately end "communication and other agreements with US security agencies" until it ceases its attacks on boats suspected of carrying drugs, which critics have described as extrajudicial executions. It has also been reported that Britain has paused sharing intelligence with the United States about suspected drug trafficking boats in the Caribbean as it does not want to be complicit in attacks the British believe are illegal. UN human rights chief Volker Turk, said last month that the strikes violate international law and amount to "extrajudicial killings." So far, the US has killed 76 people.

HUNGARY: Hungary's contribution of \$1.5 million euros to the European Peace Facility will not be used for military aid to Ukraine. "Hungary's security interest is peace in the Middle East, and Lebanon's stability is key to that. We will not use our share of the European Peace Facility to arm Ukraine. Instead we are redirecting \$1.5 million euros to support Lebanon's armed forces," said Hungarian Foreign Minister during his visit to Lebanon.

US: Name changing can be a very costly affair. President Trump signed an executive order to rebrand the Department of Defense as the Department of War in early September. He said that the new name was more appropriate given the current global situation. It's not the first time that the name of the department has been changed. The US Department of War existed from 1789 to 1947 when it was transformed to the National Military Establishment. In 1949, it was renamed the Department of Defense. The latest name change could cost as much as US\$2 billion as it will require the replacement of thousands of plaques, emblems and forms, as well as any other items that feature the department's name.

IRAN: The first Russian freight train has reached Iran through the eastern branch of the North South Transport Corridor. The train carried sulfate pulp and travelled from Moscow through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan arriving at Iran's "dry port" Aprin in just 13 days – 40% faster than comparable maritime routes through the Suez Canal. Regular service is expected two to three times a week. Iran's Aprin dry port was launched in May 2025 and is a major sorting terminal featuring efficient electronic customs processing and synchronisation of cross-border documentation. From Aprin, goods are either forwarded eastward to China or to the southward to Iran's port Bandar-Abba, and from there to India.

CHINA: China has warned that potential military involvement by Japan in the Taiwan issue will be treated as aggression and met with a forceful response. The new Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi had said Chinese attempts to forcibly reunify with Taiwan could amount to a "survival-threatening situation" under Japan's security legislation and potentially trigger a military response from Tokyo. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian condemned Takaichi's remarks, describing them as "blatantly provocative" and stressing that they violate the one-China principle that recognises Beijing's sovereignty over Taiwan. "They constitute gross intervention in China's internal affairs, challenge China's core interests, and infringe upon Chinese sovereignty," Lin said, demanding that Japan "immediately correct its actions and retract its egregious remarks," warning that otherwise, Tokyo would "bear all the consequences."

US and Australia vote against anti-Nazi resolution

Peter Farmer

Yes, you read the headline correctly. On 14 November, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and related practices promoting intolerance and racism.

The resolution passed with 114 votes in favour, 52 against, and 12 abstentions.

It called for global opposition to denial of Nazi crimes, opposition to monuments for Waffen-SS members, and efforts to combat Nazi ideology.

Australia voted against, in the company of the US, Canada, and most of the EU countries.

A statement from the EU claimed that Russia, which moved the motion, was using "the purported

basis of eliminating neo-Nazism" as a pretext to justify "territorial aggression." However, the anti-Nazi motion has a history. It has been voted on every year since 2012, when 129 nations voted for, with only the US, Palau and Canada against. The US is the only country to vote 'no' to the motion every year since 2012.

Russia has a law outlawing the denial of Nazi crimes or misrepresentation of the Soviet Union's role in World War II. Violations of the law are punishable by up to 5 years in jail or a fine of up to around AU\$21,500.

You might think condemning Nazism wasn't a particularly high bar to clear, but the Australian government has managed to limbo under it. No reaction has been received from Segal, Australia's high-profile 'Antisemitism envoy' who might have been expected to have an opinion. ❌

US Communists run for office

CJ Atkins

While Donald Trump and his billionaire backers were working overtime to scare voters into steering clear of “Mamdani the Commie,” actual Communists were busy building coalitions and winning elections in cities and towns across the country these past few months.

Several members of the Communist Party USA, working as part of broad campaigns rooted in their communities, won elected office in a number of locales and came close to victory in some others.

Whether they were running for city council, school committee, or parks board, a common thread among all the candidates was empowering the people in their neighbourhoods, towns, and districts to shape their own futures.

“Working families are being stretched to the breaking point,” Daniel Carson, new city councillor in Bangor, Maine, said. “They’re juggling rising housing costs, low wages, and the daily struggle to make ends meet.”

It’s a theme repeated in campaign after campaign. Voters were interested in how candidates would take the lead on the issues that mattered to them and their kids; they weren’t obsessed with political labels.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR PEOPLE

Carson, who is a former bank worker and labour organiser, made affordability the central focus of his run for council. He said government has to be made to “work for people, not against them.”

Bridging the world of finance and grassroots organising, he will bring an expertise in economics and a personal familiarity with working-class needs to Bangor City Hall when he takes office later this year.

Bringing his experience as an analyst to the job, Carson said he will advocate for a housing bond that will fund the construction of city-owned public housing under project labor agreements – an initiative that he says will “guarantee investment in housing for working-class residents” while also supporting workers’ rights.

“My campaign understands that collective bargaining is an essential feature of a truly democratic society,” he said. That clear-cut position helped win him strong backing from a range of unions, including the United Auto Workers Region 9A, the American Postal Workers Union

Local 536, and the Eastern Maine Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Public sector workers in the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 926 were particularly impressed by Carson’s commitment to improving public services for citizens by respecting what city employees bring to the table. “Efficiency isn’t about cutting services,” he declared during the campaign. “It’s about fairness. Treat employees right, reduce turnover, build expertise.”

Carson was already a known name in the labour movement across the state, but it took dedication and hard work during the campaign to introduce himself to the broader community in Bangor. He told them point-blank that they were the reason he was running:

“Our working class deserves a city councillor who not only understands these challenges but is ready to bring people together to find solutions.”

Once voters had a look at Carson’s platform and got the chance to meet him, they liked what they saw.

HOUSING FOR ALL

Unaffordable housing also figured prominently in Hannah Shvets’ successful run for city alderperson in Ithaca, New York. “People need to have a chance for their wages to catch up with their rents,” Shvets told voters ahead of the polls. In a city where the majority of residents are tenants, it was a message that resonated.

Shvets says she doesn’t think of herself as a politician. But disappointed that rent stabilisation measures hadn’t been passed by the city, she was prompted to step forward and put her name in the ring for the Democratic nomination for Common Council in Ward 5, where she lives.

Up against a landlord and former factory CEO heavily financed by real estate interests, Shvets prevailed in the primary in July and then beat the same opponent in the general election. A grassroots campaign through and through, her average contribution was \$15.64. Her opponent, by contrast, averaged \$362 per donor, powered by big-dollar contributions from the Realtors Association of New York and big property owners in Ithaca.

A third-year student at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Shvets works at the Tompkins County Workers Center, staffing the Workers Rights Hotline. Being in that role has given her direct insight into the challenges that working people are facing in Ithaca.



Photo: CPUSA

“We have a government that does not care about working people anymore – a government that only protects billionaires,” Shvets told attendees at a rally recently. “That’s why I’m running for council. We need a city and a country that cares about average people.”

In addition to keeping rents affordable, she says other ways local government can show it cares about working-class people is to pass a city-specific minimum wage of \$25, reform zoning to increase housing supply, keep landlords in line with health and safety standards, fund public transit, and preserve Ithaca’s sanctuary status.

It’s a pro-people platform that won Shvets the backing of the Ithaca Tenants Union, Ithaca Teachers Association, the New York Working Families Party, Planned Parenthood, Workers United, United Electrical workers (UE) Local 300, UAW Region 9, the Painters union District 4, Ithaca DSA, and many more groups.

“Showing up, caring, and working with your neighbours,” Shvets told her supporters, “we can make a difference on our local level.”

PARKS FOR THE PEOPLE

Running for commissioner of Minneapolis Parks Board District 5, Colton Baldus was also talking about creating a welcoming environment – literally. “Our parks rank among the best in the country,” his campaign website proclaimed, and keeping them in that position means making them “welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant spaces that connect people with nature and each other.”

Baldus didn’t quite make it over the finish line in his race, but he’s expanded his reputation as a fighter for the residents of his city and as an advocate who’s determined to keep Minneapolis livable. In his day-to-day activist work, Baldus is a tenant and community organiser, focused on the neighbourhoods of Elliot Park.

When families were displaced by a fire last year, he went to work to secure aid to help them make it through the tragedy and find new homes. Pushing back against neglectful landlords, leading sustainability initiatives like neighbourhood and park cleanups, and staffing food distribution efforts for those facing hunger are just a few of the other avenues where residents have come to know him.

It’s through a lot of that work that Baldus said he came to see the transformative power of parks in a neighbourhood. “Nearly every project I’ve worked on has relied on our parks, whether as gathering spaces, distribution sites, or places of recreation,” he said. “Parks provide a space for addressing environmental concerns, combating climate change, and bringing joy and stability to residents.”

Partnering with those who make parks function is key to preserving and protecting them, he argued during the campaign. “Organised labour built our parks, runs their programs, and keeps them clean and accessible.” That’s why he pledged to work with park worker unions to ensure year-round staffing, safe working conditions no matter the weather, and fair negotiations.

He also got into the nitty-gritty of making public recreational

spaces better: increased transit access to parks, better stormwater management systems, energy-efficient upgrades, and water quality improvements.

COMMUNISTS, CO-WORKERS, NEIGHBOURS

While red-baiting of the MAGA variety dogged some of these CPUSA members who ran for office, anti-communist attacks largely fell flat. Voters were more impressed with the track record and commitment of these activists than they were by any divisive and distracting scare tactics.

Each of the candidates was known by voters as a neighbour, a co-worker, a teacher, or fellow organiser. Member of the Communist Party was just another of the many aspects that defined them.

Joelle Fishman, chair of the CPUSA’s Political Action Commission and herself a candidate for public office in the past, said these campaigns were strong “because they emerge from and are part of local labour-community coalitions” and were “grounded in the collective work ... of taking on the boss and organising door-to-door.”

She said the party was proud of its members who stepped forward to run, highlighting how they “are in the mix coming out of mass struggles for dignity and respect” for working people.

Hannah Shvets, Ithaca’s newest alderperson, put it most succinctly: “I’m part of this community, and I’m fighting for it.”

People’s World ★

each of the candidates was known by voters as a neighbour, a co worker, a teacher, or fellow organiser

People’s Summit runs as alternative to COP30

The People’s Summit began on 12 November, in Belém, Brazil, and ran until 16 November as a space for resistance and an alternative proposal to the official discussions of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30).

The opening ceremony brought together some 5,000 people aboard 200 boats, which sailed along the Amazon River basin. This initial mobilisation represents the arrival of popular movements from 62 countries.

The event, at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), Guamá campus, sought to counter what popular movements describe as “false solutions” to the global climate crisis.

Organised by more than 1,100 civil society organisations, the Summit brought together more than 30,000 people who will exchange experiences and denounce those who, according to them, are destroying the environment.

“We are starting the People’s Summit ... by reinforcing our resistance to the false solutions presented by COP30, which carries with it the mark of projects to destroy nature, pollute rivers, and poison forests,” said Ayala Ferreira, national leader of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST).

Unlike COP30, which focuses on intergovernmental negotiations, the People’s Summit offers a collective environment and dialogues open to the public. Its program is based on six fundamental axes that include historical reparation and environmental racism, just transition, and food sovereignty.

The organisers emphasised that the answers to a sustainable world come from the people of the waters, forests, fields, and peripheries, who resist with their collective, agroecological, and ancestral practices.

However, in a historic event, the Brazilian indigenous movement, with the support of the federal government, ensured massive participation in COP30. As a result of this coordination, nearly 400 indigenous leaders gained access to the official spaces of the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

In addition, an indigenous village (AldeiaCOP) was established within the UFPA campus in Belém.

This meeting space welcomed 3,000 members of indigenous communities, including delegations of traditional peoples from other regions of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

This mobilisation constitutes the largest presence of indigenous peoples recorded in the history of climate conferences, according to the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (MPI) and the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Apib).

During the inauguration of AldeiaCOP on the evening of 11 November, the Minister of Indigenous Peoples, Sônia Guajajara, summarised the central message of the mobilisation. Guajajara emphasised that, although the world knows the Amazon as the largest tropical forest, it often ignores its protection. She said that the biome is being “violated, destroyed by the predatory use of land and nature.”

Along the same lines, Guajajara pointed out that “there will be no solution without the indigenous presence,” seeking a legacy of commitment to the demarcation and protection of indigenous territories as a key strategy against the climate crisis.

Both the Summit organisations and indigenous peoples demand that the discussion of the climate agenda be based on climate justice. Sara Pereira, from Fase del Programa Amazonas, commented: “There will be no just transition until the rights of traditional peoples are guaranteed.”

All the forces mobilised came together in the Unified March on 15 November, a central event to highlight that environmental justice is directly linked to the defense of life and territories.

Since 6 November, the atmosphere in Belém marked by the presence of presidents, ministers, and heads of state, convened for the Climate Summit and COP30 discussions. However, starting this week, the arrival of flotillas and caravans of activists has altered the official agenda.

The organisers of government events have had to deal with daily marches and public protests denouncing large-scale projects with a high environmental impact in the Amazon region, such as Ferrogrão and oil exploration at the mouth of the Amazon River.

Popular Resistance



Risk vectors

Attorney-General Michelle Roland wants to sell the unsellable – Freedom Of Information measures that make it harder to get information (see *Guardian* #2171). By a total coincidence, that makes it harder for journalists and non-government politicians to embarrass the government. This sort of secrecy was criticised ferociously by Anthony Albanese in opposition, but now he’s in government he’s all for it. They don’t like it being easy and they don’t like anonymous FOI requests. If the request is anonymous, how will government departments know who to punish?

Of course Labor can’t just admit that, so they’re saying that letting journalists and other politicians know things is dangerous. Since ‘dangerous’ sounds too simple, Roland is trying to impress us all by telling us that scary new technology and the ability to lodge FOI requests anonymously creates “risk vectors that could be exploited by offshore actors seeking government-held information for potentially nefarious purposes.”

‘Risk Vectors’ would also be a great name for a hero in a space opera; ‘Captain Risk Vectors, flying to infinity and beyond.’

Nature Positive

Some weasel words are obvious because you can’t imagine the negative. Nobody wants to be ‘nature negative,’ so what does ‘nature positive’ mean? Enough for there to be a ‘Global Nature Positive Summit’ in Sydney, where Tanya Plibersek gave a speech. Plibersek spent her time as Environment Minister opening coal mines and taking selfie with koalas, so maybe “nature positive” means that no matter how much environmental damage she’s done, Tanya knows one end of a koala from the other.

Diversity of views

This one sounds good. We wouldn’t want everyone forced to have the same ideas, would we? Really it depends on the topic. If it’s an important topic and there are actual facts involved, maybe accurate or informed views are more important than just diversity for diversity’s sake.

Rupert Murdoch’s *Newscorp* has defended itself against accusations that it encourages climate denialism by paying denialists hefty sums of money to write opinion pieces. It does a lot of that. The *News* spokesperson was indignant and defended their habit of encouraging climate denialism by invoking the old diversity of views.

When the US invaded Iraq and Australia joined in, out of hundreds of Murdoch papers, exactly two opposed it.

Dual use

Almost anything can be ‘dual use,’ as anyone who’s ever made a paper plane out of a letter from Centrelink knows. Most of the time, ‘dual use’ refers to things that can be used for civilian or military purposes, like fertilisers that can also be explosives. ‘Dual use’ is very popular with nations that sanction others, because it means they can stop all manner of useful and starvation-preventing things from getting to their victims.

Now Israel is into it. Israel is still limiting aid shipments into Gaza, including barring basic items, such as tent poles, that it classifies as “dual use” because it says they have the potential to be used for military purposes. It’s true that tent poles can hold up tents to shelter soldiers or weapons, but in this case ‘dual use’ is a transparent excuse to stop tents sheltering genocide survivors.

Social engineering

A venerable Weasel Word, ‘social engineering’ sounds creepy and dystopian. It suggests that the government might be putting mind-altering drugs in the water supply, or at least a poster of the Prime Minister’s face in every house that we have to say “Good morning Albo” to at the start of the day (that really would be dystopian). In practice, ‘social engineering’ just means ‘equality promoting measures the writer/speaker doesn’t like,’ most recently anything that involves being fair or non-hostile to trans people.



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Israel turns Lebanon into a 'remote occupation' testing ground

When Israel assassinated Hezbollah's longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah and killed off much of the group's leadership in September 2024, it did more than decapitate a movement – it redrew the map of power in southern Lebanon. For the first time in decades, Israel found itself facing a fragmented, leaderless resistance on the other side of its northern border. It seized that opportunity not through invasion, but through technological innovation.

Southern Lebanon today is not occupied in the conventional sense. There are no columns of tanks, no checkpoints, no Israeli troops marching through border villages. Instead, it is occupied from above and afar – by drones, sensors, and algorithms. This is the new face of control: a remote occupation that governs not through soldiers, but through constant visibility and the threat of instant annihilation.

The IDF has long used the skies over Lebanon for reconnaissance, but since 2024, this surveillance has become total. High-altitude drones now orbit the border almost continuously, monitoring cell signals, tracking vehicles, and transmitting data to Israeli intelligence systems in real time. A report from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace described this transformation as “a testing ground for remote territorial control” – a laboratory for managing space without soldiers.

Even the air itself is part of the occupation. Residents of southern Lebanon's major cities of Nabatieh, Tyre, and Bint Jbeil report frequent, if not near constant hums of Israeli drones overhead. They do not see soldiers, yet they live under their gaze. The threat of sudden death – whether by drone strike, guided bomb, or automated targeting algorithm – is permanent.

The killing of Nasrallah and most of

Hezbollah's senior command created a vacuum in southern Lebanon's political and security structure. The organisation's leadership network, once deeply embedded in every aspect of life in the south, was thrown into disarray. With command channels disrupted, Hezbollah's local influence receded, leaving villages and border zones effectively exposed.

Israel has capitalised on this moment. With Hezbollah weakened, the IDF no longer needs to physically occupy territory to shape it. Instead, Israel has constructed an “invisible architecture” of domination: a

kinetic force. In the aftermath, Hezbollah reverted to landlines and in-person couriers, a regression that underlines Israel's dominance in the electronic sphere.

Even psychological control has gone digital. In recent operations, Israel has relied on text messages and social media alerts to warn civilians in southern Lebanon of incoming airstrikes. Residents in Tyre, Nabatieh, and the southern suburbs of Beirut have reported receiving evacuation notices on their phones – sometimes only a short time before explosions occurred. These automated warnings, while presented as humanitarian measures,

violations, with drones flying over Lebanese villages, UN compounds, and even hospitals.

The most striking aspect of this new occupation is its invisibility. Control has become infrastructural rather than territorial. Israel no longer needs to plant a flag to dominate a region; it only needs to see everything that moves within it.

This invisibility also makes resistance more difficult. There is no army to confront, no checkpoint to tear down, only an omnipresent sky and a network of unseen servers humming in Tel Aviv or Haifa. It is an occupation designed not to be seen, but to be felt.

What is unfolding in southern Lebanon is not just a regional experiment. Militaries around the world are watching closely. The model being refined here – a system of remote, AI-driven, data-based domination – could easily be adapted for future conflicts. It promises control without the burdens of occupation, precision without accountability, and domination without visibility.

For Lebanon, this means a new kind of sovereignty crisis: one in which the state's borders are intact on paper, but penetrated by machines. For the world, it signals the normalisation of “automated occupation,” a system that replaces soldiers with code and turns entire populations into datasets.

In the skies over southern Lebanon, a new form of imperial power is being perfected. The drones may fly home each night, but their gaze remains. The pagers that explode, the phones that warn of incoming bombs, the algorithms that decide who lives and dies, are all part of a single architecture of control.

The methods first used in Palestine are being upgraded and used in Lebanon. If the world does not reckon with what is happening here, this model of domination – silent, technological, and endless – may soon appear in warzones around the globe.

People's World ★

no army to confront, no checkpoint to tear down

blend of persistent aerial presence, cyber-warfare, and AI-assisted targeting systems that allow it to exert control without crossing the border.

The new model combines multiple layers of coercion. Drones conduct round-the-clock reconnaissance, feeding data into artificial intelligence programs similar to the “Lavender” system that reportedly helped identify tens of thousands of targets in Gaza. These same algorithms, integrated with real-time signals intelligence, can flag “suspicious” movements or communications patterns in Lebanon's south within seconds.

On the cyber front, Israel has demonstrated its capacity to infiltrate Hezbollah's logistics chain directly. In one notorious case, a wave of pager and radio explosions killed and injured Hezbollah operatives – an attack that combined digital espionage with

have also become a means of demonstrating total technological reach: Israel can not only strike anywhere, but communicate directly with those it targets.

All of this represents a profound shift in Israel's approach to warfare. By projecting power remotely, Israel reduces the political costs of occupation – no Israeli military casualties, no soldiers captured, no domestic backlash. The coercive effect, however, remains intact. Lebanon's airspace, communication networks, and southern terrain are now extensions of Israel's surveillance regime.

Human rights organisations warn that this model blurs the line between military and civilian targets. Human rights organisations have documented patterns of indiscriminate strikes and civilian displacement resulting from automated targeting and mass surveillance. UNIFIL reports near-daily airspace

Gaza faces humanitarian crisis

The humanitarian catastrophe facing the Palestinians in Gaza continued to worsen as the winter's first strong rainfall sent water cascading through parts of Gaza's sprawling Muwasi tent camp.

This follows reports that Israeli forces had killed three more Palestinians east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza and a teenager during a raid on the Old Askar refugee camp east of Nablus in the occupied West Bank.

In Gaza, residents attempted to dig trenches to keep the water from flooding their tents, as heavy rain

forced through tears in tarpaulins and makeshift shelters.

Some people tried to shelter in destroyed buildings, even those at risk of collapse, with gaping holes covered by pieces of plastic.

Recently Bassil Naggar bought a new tent on the black market for the equivalent of about \$1100, because the summer sun had worn his old tent thin. Still, rainwater was leaking through.

“I spent all of Friday pushing water out of my tent,” Naggar said, adding that his neighbours' tents and belongings were wrecked.

“Water puddles are inches high, and there is no proper drainage.”

According to the United Nations, Muwasi was sheltering up to 425,000 displaced Palestinians earlier this year, the vast majority in makeshift temporary tents, after Israel's attacks displaced most of Gaza's population of over two million people.

The Israeli defence body in charge of humanitarian aid in Gaza has said it is allowing in winter preparation materials including blankets and heavy tarps, but aid organisations warn the efforts are far from sufficient when winter

temperatures plummet and the wind whips off the Mediterranean.

The future facing Gazans is unclear as the first stage of the ceasefire agreement is nearing its end.

The United Nations security council is voting on a United States proposal for a UN mandate for a so-called stabilisation force in Gaza.

This comes despite opposition from Russia, China, and some Arab nations.

Meanwhile, the UN peacekeepers in Lebanon (Unifil) said they had been fired on by an Israeli tank in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon's army condemned the attack, calling it a “dangerous escalation,” and the latest in a string of “violations of Lebanese sovereignty,” by the Israelis.

A statement from the Lebanese army said they were working in co-ordination with “friendly countries” to end the continued Israeli violations.

Israel admitted the attack, claiming it did so due to “poor weather conditions” and mistook the UN patrol for “suspects.”

Morning Star ★



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