

**Submission
No 39**

MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED

Organisation: Palestinian community of Western Australia

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of Western Australia**

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The Palestinian community of western Australia opposes proposals to ban or criminalise political slogans, including phrases such as “globalise the intifada” and “from the river to the sea”.

We are concerned that banning political speech will undermine the rights to protest, disproportionately affect Australia’s multicultural society, with the Palestinian Semitic culture in Australia being the most affected, along with other Australians who oppose genocide in Palestine, and weaken democratic participation in New South Wales.

(a) Community cohesion and safety

There is no evidence that the use of these slogans, in and of themselves, poses a threat to community safety. In our experience, they are used in peaceful protests to express political opposition, solidarity and calls for justice.

Silencing one community’s political expression is more likely to deepen division and mistrust than to promote social cohesion.

(b) Claims that the slogans “contain hate”

The meanings of the slogans mentioned in this investigation differ from their original or intended meaning. The word “intifada” in Semitic Arabic means a popular movement against injustice, and the phrase “from the river to the sea” refers to the borders of the State of Palestine as depicted on atlas maps, or even to the internationally recognized State of Palestine within the 1967 borders.

Political disagreement or insults should not be treated as a crime. Restrictions on freedom of expression should be limited to cases involving threats, intimidation, or actual violence.

(e) Freedom of Political Expression

Banning specific political slogans would directly restrict political communication and protest. This is contrary to Australian principles.

Political expression opposing occupation, apartheid, or state violence should be protected, not punished.

(f) Existing laws are sufficient

Existing NSW and Commonwealth laws already deal with genuine threats to safety. Expanding into bans on political language risks inconsistent enforcement and overreach without improving community safety.

(g) Other concerns

Turning political language into an enforcement trigger risk increasing police–citizen confrontation at protests and damaging trust between communities and authorities.

Such outcomes undermine long-term community safety and social cohesion.

We recommend to the Committee that:

- 1- No additional political slogans or symbols be banned or criminalised, including those associated with Palestinian advocacy.
- 2- Any proposed bans on specific slogans, including “globalise the intifada” or “From the River to the Sea” or “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free” be abandoned.
- 3- Palestinian symbols, slogans and expressions of solidarity be explicitly recognised as protected political communication, not hate speech.
- 4- Legislation and guidance clearly distinguish between universally recognised hate symbols and political expression opposing occupation, apartheid or state violence.

- 5- Existing criminal law continue to address genuine threats of violence or intimidation without expanding into content-based regulation of political speech.
- 6- Protest rights and political expression be clearly protected within NSW criminal and public order law.
- 7- NSW Government acknowledge and reject the racial discrimination inherent in selectively policing Palestinian political expression.
- 8- NSW ensure any guidance to police and public authorities is content-neutral, evidence-based, and designed to prevent discriminatory enforcement against Palestinians and those advocating Palestinian rights.
- 9- Community education and dialogue initiatives be prioritised over broad prohibitions or expanded police powers

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