

**Submission  
No 62**

## **MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED**

**Organisation:** CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine

**Date Received:** 12 January 2026

**Submission to:** NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety on [Measures to prohibit slogans that incite hatred](#)

**Submission from:** CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine

Dear Committee members,

CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Terms of Reference put forward by the Committee. We also endorse the submission made by PSA Unionists for Palestine.

## **About CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine**

CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine is a community organisation of rank & file members of the Community and Public Sector Union. We represent a mass movement of Australian unionists taking action to stop Israel's genocide in Gaza, and end the occupation and apartheid of Palestine.

Thousands of public servants have signed [an open letter](#) calling for an arms embargo on Israel, to stop the genocide we are witnessing in real time. Instead of listening, politicians and agency heads attacked and tried to intimidate us. As a union, we fought back to protect our rights and freedom of political communication.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has [demanded](#) the Australian government secure peace and comply with genocide law, including by ending all military trade with Israel. The Australian government has not acted. A growing number of section councils within CPSU are further acknowledging and condemning Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people, and organising to achieve our goals as a working class movement.

Government employees must uphold international obligations including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention), including the Genocide Convention Act 1949. As human beings, and as workers, we oppose all forms of racism.

## **The Bondi shooting**

CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine is appalled by the massacre committed at Bondi on 14 December 2025. We stand opposed to all racism, including antisemitism, as there is no place in our movement for division and hate.

We support the statements that have been made by CPSU and ACTU, and commend our members who sprang into action to donate blood to help support the victims. We stand in solidarity with our Jewish comrades in the fight for freedom and justice for all.

# 1. Explanatory material

## Israel's genocide

The consensus of [genocide scholars](#), [legal scholars](#) and [human rights experts](#) is that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. The Gaza Genocide is only the latest series of atrocities in more than century of military occupation in Palestine. Australia has a long history of complicity in this colonial occupation, through its participation in the Allies' invasion of Palestine in 1917, through to its unquestioning support for Israel throughout the 20th century.

In the last few weeks alone:

- Israel has [banned most aid organisations](#) needed by the genocide survivors
- Israel has escalated its campaign of terrorism in Gaza - for example, [killing at least 14](#) in major airstrikes last Thursday 8 January, including 5 children
- Palestinians in Gaza have [suffered flooding](#) and freezing temperatures, while the vast majority of the Gaza Genocide survivors are living in tents.
- Israel has [approved a major expansion](#) of the apartheid system in the occupied West Bank.

The apartheid system imposed on Palestine, based on Jewish supremacy and Zionism, has been recognised by the [International Court of Justice](#) and the [UN human rights chief](#). Evidence of Israel's genocide in Palestine can be viewed live on the internet, and is being archived for use in future legal proceedings and historical work.

Australia is also a colonial country, built on the genocide and land stolen from its indigenous civilisations. Workers in this land are learning from the horrors of the past, and fighting for the end of colonisation everywhere, and freedom for all occupied and oppressed peoples.

## Social cohesion

The term "social cohesion" has meant [different things](#) to different people. Perhaps the most authoritative definition is the one [recently suggested by the Governor-General](#):

"The national consensus in support of democracy, freedom and the rule of law"

Slogan bans directly undermine every element of this definition. As we will explore throughout the submission, citizens cannot meaningfully participate in democracy when governments criminalise slogans which criticise state policy. The foundation of democracy is that citizens can challenge power, criticize government policy, and advocate for change.

We also note that the Palestinian people have been denied every aspect of this trifecta, not only during the past century of occupation, but particularly during the ongoing genocide. This condition is not sustainable or acceptable in Australia.

True social cohesion can only be achieved through true equality - government and community members **must** place equal value on Palestinian lives, suffering and happiness. The vast majority of Australians **must** be listened to when they express their grief about Palestine. To sideline, intimidate and persecute ethnic groups is to harm social cohesion.

## "Intifada"

Intifada is a word in Arabic which is commonly translated as "uprising". In the Palestinian context, the First Intifada and Second Intifada were periods of struggle against the

occupation. These resistance movements employed many tactics, which initially were nonviolent, however these struggles did see violence occur against Israelis, as well as much greater violence against Palestinians.

In Arabic, other struggles are also referred to as an “intifada”. For example, the word also describes the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising against the despicable Nazi regime in Germany. “Intifada” does not mean racist violence against members of an ethnic group, inspired by hate and prejudice. It is not inherently hateful, instead referring to resistance and struggle against injustice, colonisation and oppression.

It would be discriminatory to ban a word because it is in a language spoken by a particular ethnic group. This would also harm the freedom and democracy required for social cohesion.

## Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a term given to prejudice, discrimination, hostility or hate directed towards Jewish people. Antisemitism is wrong, and is deeply destructive to social cohesion and the power of the working class.

We do not accept the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism which has recently been supported by government bodies in Australia. This definition labels protected political communication as “antisemitism”, including views about the governments of Israel and other nations.

## 2. Disinformation must be thrown out

There is no known link between the phrase “globalize the intifada” and the Bondi shooting. The supposed association between the two has been popularised through repeated and vague aspersions by various media corporations, largely legacy media outlets such as TV and print media. However, these companies have been careful to avoid making factual statements, because no such link appears to exist.

The myth seems to have first begun in a grossly irresponsible [New York Times article](#) by Bret Stephens, rushed out on the same day as the shooting. Bret Stephens is a known climate denier, who has used his career in journalism to manufacture doubt about established climate science, in order to destroy the political willpower to address climate change.

Stephens has previously claimed that Israel’s settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank are legal, contrary to the findings of the International Court of Justice.

Stephens is a blatant propagandist whom the Committee should ignore, as he does not have any credibility. **And Stephens’ only argument to link “globalise the intifada” and the Bondi attack was that it was “reasonable to surmise.”**

No evidence has been presented to link this phrase to the Bondi attack, beyond irresponsible speculation by journalists.

## The Palestine movement does not include ISIS

Almost immediately after Bret Stephens’ hit piece was published, it was discredited by Rabbi Jay Michaelson. In an [op-ed for Jewish journal The Forward](#), Rabbi Michaelson noted that the gunmen were motivated by ISIS, not the Palestinian liberation movement:

Some pundits and Jewish leaders – Bret Stephens, David Frum, Deborah Lipstadt – have rushed in to insist that this attack is what people mean by “Globalize the Intifada,” the infamous *cri de coeur* of some Palestinian protesters.

**Not likely.** In fact, ISIS and Hamas loathe one another – so much so that there was even a conspiracy theory among Gazans that ISIS was secretly being supported by Israel and the United States, in part because it prioritized the fight against Syria over the fight against Israel. ISIS also opposes Palestinian nationalism (and thus the Intifada) because they seek to unite the entire Muslim world in a single *umma* governed by Islamic Law (and by their own clerics). **ISIS has no interest in the Intifada, globalized or otherwise.**

We are not aware of any member of the Palestine activism community who would support, advocate for, or commit such an attack on the Jewish community, and such a person would not be welcome.

The statement from the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) expressed heartbreak and condemnation of this act of hate, [noting that](#):

Week after week, we have gathered together – the best of our community, from First Nations leaders, members of the Jewish community, side by side with Palestinian siblings, and the wider Arab community, among many other allies from all walks of life. Together, we have insisted on a world that is free from racism and hate. And we will continue to insist that antisemitism, like all forms of racism and hate, has no place in our society.

## **The attackers were not supported by Islam**

The antisemitic ideology of the Bondi gunmen is far removed from mainstream Islam. This is demonstrated by statements from the Australian National Imams' Council (ANIC), which has [unequivocally condemned ISIS and the Bondi massacre](#):

**The Muslim world has suffered firsthand at the hands of ISIS**, with the overwhelming majority of its victims being Muslims. Communities across the Middle East, Africa, and beyond have endured mass killings, displacement, and the destruction of places of worship, including mosques.

ISIS does not represent Islam or the Muslim world in any way. Its ideology is evil and rooted in violence and terror. It bears no relationship to Islamic teachings, ethics, or scholarship, which emphasise the sanctity of life, justice, and mercy.

...We also reject any attempt to connect ISIS or its members to Islam or to frame its evil and dangerous ideology as a distorted version of the Islamic faith.

**All reputable and prominent Islamic institutions, scholars, and Muftis across the Muslim world have openly, repeatedly, and unequivocally condemned and denounced ISIS and its ideology.** This includes leading global Islamic authorities such as Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Muslim World League, the International Union of Muslim Scholars, Dar al-Ifta al-Misriyyah (Egypt), Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, and the European Council for Fatwa and Research, among many others. **There is no legitimacy, credibility, or scholarly support for ISIS within mainstream Islam.**

Anyone connected to, supporting, or promoting ISIS ideology must be denounced and held accountable. There can be no tolerance for the justification, glorification, or revival of an ideology built on violence and terror.

## **Bondi is not relevant to the Terms of Reference**

The views of Rabbi Michaelson, ANIC, and APAN appear to have been wholly vindicated, as **no evidence has emerged to suggest that the Bondi gunmen ever attended a Palestine protest, let alone chanted “globalise the intifada”**.

This has not stopped legacy media organisations campaigning in the hope of restricting Australians’ freedom of political expression, as well as to lobby for a Royal Commission into the Bondi shooting.

Throughout these campaigns, no credible journalist has presented a coherent argument that the use of this phrase contributed to the Bondi shooting, or that the Bondi shooting represented an act of “intifada” in any way.

**The Committee must base its decision on evidence. Therefore, the Bondi terror attack cannot be used to justify decisions relating to activism for Palestine.**

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Base any decision on evidence**

Disinformation and myths about the union movement, human rights advocacy and anti-genocide activism should not be considered in coming to a decision.

## **3. Workers must be free to speak out**

Kenneth Stern, the lead drafter of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, has repeatedly argued against the adoption of IHRA by institutions.

Stern [stated in 2019](#):

Antisemitism is a real issue, but too often people, both on the political right and political left, give it a pass if a person has the “right” view on Israel. Historically, **antisemitism thrives best** when leaders stoke the human capacity to define an “**us**” and a “**them**”, and where the integrity of **democratic institutions and norms (such as free speech) are under assault**.

Stern that “us and them” politics lead to racism, while democracy and freedom are protective factors against racism.

This arises due to the class structure inherent in our society. Working class movements derive their power from numbers, which is most powerful when the people are united in solidarity. The ruling class employs divisive, racist politics as tools to erode class solidarity, so that it may gain power to exploit others - which has historically led to racist violence on the part of states.

The working class is highly diverse. Antisemitism, along with all other racism, weakens our power to fight against exploitation and oppression. Unions must be free to organise and communicate among workers.

Rank and file union members are united in solidarity around opposition to the genocide in Gaza, and will continue to be, as we cannot afford racism and division to infiltrate our movement.

## **Workers must be free to speak out**

The government's suggestion of banning slogans will only harm the ability of the working class to fight oppression.

Social cohesion has been eroded repeatedly due to actions by businesses, the media, the government, as well as public service agencies, to silence the voices of ordinary people speaking out for the human cost of the Gaza Genocide.

One example relevant to the media and public is the sacking of Antoinette Lattouf by the ABC. Although the ABC have been found to have acted illegally, the case had a wide variety of damaging impacts to Antoinette - yet another example where the law was ignored in order to silence a critic of Israel.

## **Antoinette Lattouf**

The Federal Court's decision in Lattouf vs ABC demonstrates that political communication is protected under Australian law, as well as how institutions skirt the law to intimidate workers' communication, damaging social cohesion.

Antoinette Lattouf was dismissed from her role as an ABC Radio Sydney presenter, after sharing a social media post from Human Rights Watch reporting on Israel's use of starvation as a weapon of war. Lattouf was sacked as a result of a pro-Israel lobbying campaign.

The Federal Court found that the ABC contravened the Fair Work Act. Antoinette was unlawfully terminated for reasons including that she held a political opinion. While the ABC tried to argue that her post violated their social media policy, this argument was rejected as the story was newsworthy - Antoinette was doing her job in the interests of the Australian public.

Her victory over the ABC demonstrates that workers will not stand for being silenced, through abuse of legal processes and intimidation of political leaders and bosses. Public sector workers have a duty to be "frank and fearless", to advocate for doing the right thing, and we will defend our right to do so.

Public sector workers have nonetheless been targeted, for speaking out against genocide, war crimes, occupation and apartheid. These actions damage social cohesion and must be fought.

## **Workers lead the way**

Everyday people in Australia are capable of amazing things. We witnessed such an act when Ahmed Al-Ahmed put his life on the line to save members of his community.

However, the NSW Government's focus has so far been on how to disempower everyday people, attempting to fix problems purely through suppressive laws rather than helping build a strong, cohesive community.

For example, the NSW Government rushed legislation through parliament in order to ban people from protesting at, or near, places of worship. This was passed not to protect places of worship, but to protect Australia's inexcusable military relationship with Israel, after the synagogue was the site of a [protest against a speaker](#) from the genocidal IDF. Protecting war criminals from protest is in direct contravention to the demands of the union movement.

The government proceeded to [ban protests](#) near places of worship (unconstitutionally). After protecting religious groups from protest, it is ironic that the NSW government is now requiring [religious groups to consult with police](#) in order to run prayer groups.

Freedom to practice religion is violated, and so is the democratic right of the people to express their concerns and outrage when religious institutions are complicit in acts of violence and terror. The NSW government wishes to prevent people both from practicing and protesting religious institutions - when both must be acceptable in a democracy.

The futility of these laws was proven when NSW Police [approved the Form 1 for a neo-Nazi protest](#). It is clear where the ruling class' priorities lie, and it is not to promote social cohesion.

As Kenneth Stern suggests - working class movements fight for unity. Rather than eroding our freedoms and ability to fight division and oppression, the Committee should look for ways to support workers of NSW in taking action against racism and hate.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **2. Reject all proposals to ban protest slogans or political speech**

Such bans:

- Violate fundamental democratic rights
- Disproportionately harm working-class, migrant, and Arabic-speaking Australians
- Give police unchecked power to criminalise political expression
- Undermine union organizing and working-class internationalism
- Destroy social cohesion by creating a two-tiered system of political participation.

#### **3. Protect workers' right to political speech**

Public servants have a professional duty to uphold international law, including the Genocide Convention Act 1949. We must be able to speak out against government complicity in genocide without facing workplace or criminal penalties.

The Committee should:

- Affirm that public servants have the right to political speech on their own time
- Condemn the persecution of public servants who stand up against racism
- Protect public servants from workplace retaliation for expressing political views
- Recognize that upholding international law is part of public servants' professional duty

## **4. Rogue police and post-truth policy**

The Committee's terms of reference include:

*d) Australian and international examples of best practice to combat the use of such slogans, including measures and approaches taken in the United Kingdom*

Unfortunately, the abuse of process on the part of police, both in the United Kingdom and Australia, do not represent good practice, let alone best practice, in the development or enforcement of the law.

As public servants it is incumbent on us to call out when good governance and accountability break down.

No relevant laws have changed in the United Kingdom since the Bondi tragedy. However, some departments of the UK police force appear to have bypassed the lawmaking process altogether, simply announcing that they would arrest people who chanted or wrote the phrase “globalise the intifada”.

On 17 December, the London Metropolitan and Greater Manchester Police made a [statement](#) that:

*“We know communities are concerned about placards and chants such as “globalise the intifada” and those using it at future protest or in a targeted way should expect the Met and GMP to take action. Violent acts have taken place, the context has changed - words have meaning and consequence. We will act decisively and make arrests.”*

Despite not being decided through an established judicial process, this new “law” has already been enforced unilaterally by the police. [Two were arrested](#) immediately after the police made its unilateral decision, then [four the next day](#).

This new “law” is not based in either (a) the findings of a court of law, or (b) legislation put in place by the executive branch of government. It was created by autonomous decision of police departments, without any reference to the judicial or executive branches of government.

This is an extra-judicial policy, developed without any process of fact-finding, research, consultation or legal analysis. In fact, this “law” is directly derived from disinformation around the phrase “globalise the intifada”, so the UK cannot demonstrate this will improve the safety or social cohesion of anybody in the UK. It is therefore impossible to argue that this new “law” improves the safety or social cohesion of the United Kingdom.

Police Departments cannot be “judge, jury and executioner” of the law. This contravenes the fundamental principles of separation of powers inherent in the Westminster System, bypasses democratic accountability, and damages social cohesion.

## **NSW Police invent “laws” to match**

In Australia, police have become emboldened by the UK police’s attempt to invent new laws, and have moved in a similar direction.

In Australia, the law is very clear that criticism of Israel, Zionism and the Israel Occupation Forces is [not inherently antisemitic, and does not breach the Racial Discrimination Act](#). However, NSW Police have already followed UK Police beyond the law to support Israel.

The Police bypassed the Committee to [arrest a woman](#) wearing a shirt which read “globalise the intifada”. Again, this was unilateral action by NSW Police, noting that “real law” has not changed. As established above, “globalise the intifada” is not hate speech, and does not inherently encourage or invoke either hate or violence.

The woman was [released without charge](#). Her release is not surprising, as she had not broken the law – but she never should have been arrested in the first place. Her arrest was about intimidating Australians into obeying rules that cannot be justified by our governance system.

Laws should only be decided through a transparent, consistent process, and due process must always be respected. However, this trend in policing demonstrates a disturbing reality which is now weaponised against the Australian community, in support of Zionism.

## The process is the penalty

Similar persecution was recently experienced by Andrew Brown of Sydney, who was [arrested for wearing an anti-Israel T-shirt](#) which similarly did not violate any laws. Brown's persecution went much further than the recent arrests, as the police prosecutor initially attempted to take the case to trial, despite apparently holding a belief that Brown had not broken the law:

Brown says that early in the matter, the police prosecutor rang his barrister. The prosecutor, according to Brown, said he had reviewed the evidence across the matters and could not see how police could obtain a conviction. **The prosecutor said he was recommending the charges be withdrawn.**

Two weeks later, Brown says, the prosecutor rang again. This time he said his position had changed, not because the evidence had changed, but because **he had received instructions which had come directly from the Commander of Strike Force Pearl**. Proceed with all matters regardless of the likely outcome.

Despite its belief that Brown had done nothing wrong, NSW Police attempted to proceed with a criminal trial anyway. This allowed the police to impose bail conditions that were extremely punitive:

Brown says the bail and bond conditions imposed through Waverley Local Court were extraordinary, effectively excluding him from the eastern suburbs for close to a year. He says the practical effect was banishment, achieved without a conviction.

The exclusion area (which, we reiterate, was applied in the absence of any crime) extended practically all the way to his front door. Andrew was virtually removed from public life – not dissimilar to being placed under house arrest – by a unilateral decision by a department within NSW Police.

Andrew fought back, and was only recently vindicated. But his arrest, politically biased treatment and bail conditions did great harm to our freedom and rule of law, because an injury to one is an injury to all.

These disturbing examples of NSW police persecution mirrors a similar case in the United Kingdom, where musician Bob Vylan was investigated by the police, over a minor public order offense which could never have led to a major charge. Vylan stated that he was investigated for a Section 5 Public Order Offense with no aggravation. Despite the minor nature of this charge, Vylan was subjected to a media campaign against him.

As in Andrew's case, this charge was eventually dropped. In a statement on Instagram, [Vylan noted](#):

We were not investigated for hate speech or incitement, but the lowest public order offense you can commit, punishable by a level 3 fine, which is a maximum of a

thousand pounds. The news will not report on how minor of an offense we were investigated for. They may not have all that information. Or, they may possibly feel that by highlighting the common and trivial charge being investigated, it puts things into perspective. And suddenly, the weeks of harassment, the incredible invasion of privacy that we and our families faced, and the sensational and often completely false headlines they ran aren't actually as justified as they would have liked them to be.

There is something drastically wrong with this country when entertainers, medical professionals, university students, pensioners, anybody you can think of from any walk of life, can be investigated on such ridiculous grounds such as saying "death, death to the IDF" or the Arabic word for uprising.

...We are now in the process of, unfortunately, building back what has been chipped away of both our professional, but also and most importantly, our private lives by the British government and its various institutions of subjugation. And whilst we are certain our interactions with these institutions does not end here, we are more prepared than we have ever been to face them when they do.

So, whilst we have escaped a criminal trial, we have most certainly experienced a trial by fire.

As Michael West described Andrew Brown's persecution, "**the process becomes the penalty.**" Such unilateral punishment doled out by police departments can never achieve justice. They damage the consensus for rule of law inherent to social cohesion, as they waste taxpayer money, demonise good law-abiding citizens, and add to the level of anger in a community which is already experiencing psychosocial harm as a result of the genocide in Gaza.

This is not to mention the occurrence of nonviolent protesters being harassed, persecuted or assaulted, such as the assault of Hannah Thomas during a protest at SEC Plating.

These rogue actions erode trust in the government and the legal system. When they are applied against human rights activists who are advocating, in good faith, against an ongoing genocide which has likely killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people due to their ethnic group – they make a mockery of the idea of protecting community safety.

**The Committee must commit to reigning in rogue actors directing the NSW Police, who would circumvent due process to punish law-abiding citizens.**

#### **Recommendations:**

#### **4. Investigate police overreach and extra-judicial enforcement**

NSW Police and UK Police have arrested people for speech that must be protected. This circumvents democratic process and damages social cohesion. The Committee must:

- Investigate the arrest and persecution of Andrew Brown
- Review NSW Police's Strike Force Pearl and its directive to "proceed regardless of the likely outcome" of criminal cases
- Investigate whether police have been directed to intimidate or enforce behaviour in the absence of due process.

## 5. Recommendations

CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine considers that the Committee must:

### 1. Base any decision on evidence

Disinformation and myths about the union movement, human rights advocacy and anti-genocide activism should not be considered in coming to a decision.

### 2. Reject all proposals to ban protest slogans or political speech

Such bans:

- Violate fundamental democratic rights
- Disproportionately harm working-class, migrant, and Arabic-speaking Australians
- Give police unchecked power to criminalise political expression
- Undermine union organizing and working-class internationalism
- Destroy social cohesion by creating a two-tiered system of political participation.

### 3. Protect workers' right to political speech

Public servants have a professional duty to uphold international law, including the Genocide Convention Act 1949. We must be able to speak out against government complicity in genocide without facing workplace or criminal penalties.

The Committee should:

- Affirm that public servants have the right to political speech on their own time
- Condemn the persecution of public servants who stand up against racism
- Protect public servants from workplace retaliation for expressing political views
- Recognize that upholding international law is part of public servants' professional duty

### 4. Investigate police overreach and extra-judicial enforcement

NSW Police and UK Police have arrested people for speech that must be protected. This circumvents democratic process and damages social cohesion. The Committee must:

- Investigate the arrest and persecution of Andrew Brown
- Review NSW Police's Strike Force Pearl and its directive to "proceed regardless of the likely outcome" of criminal cases
- Investigate whether police have been directed to intimidate or enforce behaviour in the absence of due process.

### 5. End NSW complicity in genocide

The best way to reduce hate and improve social cohesion is to:

- Implement an immediate two-way arms embargo on Israel, as called for by the ACTU and the international justice system
- Cease diplomatic support for Israel's genocide, apartheid, and occupation
- Support Palestinian self-determination and those fighting for it.

## 6. Conclusion

The union movement has faced language suppression before. We have always resisted, and we will continue to resist.

We commit to the fight against antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism, and all forms of oppression that divide the working class.

We stand in solidarity with all workers fighting for liberation - from Palestine to Australia to every corner of the globe.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions - representing 1.8 million workers - has called for a two-way arms embargo on Israel. Criminalising the language we use to advocate for this position is an attack on the entire trade union movement.

When governments try to silence us by banning slogans due to the language they are in, our answer is clear: we will not be silenced. We will continue to organise. We will continue to resist.

Solidarity forever.

Sarah Barker

CPSU Rank & File 4 Palestine

