

Resolution 1

The AEU condemns the Israeli Government's acts of genocide towards Palestinians in Gaza.

The AEU supports the ACTU 23 May 2025 statement on Gaza.

A permanent ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Israeli Government's military operations in Gaza remains paramount. In such an outcome, the AEU calls on all governments and international aid agencies to urgently work together with Palestinians to restore and rebuild the necessary public infrastructure, schooling, health, housing and sustenance provisions.

ACTU statement on Gaza

23rd May 2025

The Australian Union movement is a movement of peace and solidarity. We continue to be horrified by the humanitarian catastrophe facing Palestinians in Gaza. The ACTU reiterates our previous statements and resolutions of October 2023, February and April 2024. The Australian Union movement condemns the Israeli Government's blockade since 2 March on humanitarian aid, including food, entering Gaza, putting more than two million Palestinians at critical risk of mass starvation. The Israeli Government has sought to shut down the existing aid and distribution system run by the United Nations and humanitarian partners and establish its own delivery mechanisms by the Israeli military, contravening fundamental humanitarian principles, and meaning large parts of Gaza will go without supplies.

The Australian Union movement strongly opposes the escalation of Israeli military operations in Gaza, with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) launching ground forces into northern and southern Gaza and the intensification of air strikes, following the announcement of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu that Israel had approved plans to seize control of the Gaza Strip and forcibly move hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

The ACTU condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war and urges Israel to comply with the International Court of Justice's Order to take immediate steps to prevent acts of genocide, punish incitement to genocide, and facilitate the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza. Israel must immediately provide food and essentials to people in Gaza and ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.

We stand in solidarity with workers such as health workers who are both dealing with the immediate risk to their own health and safety and of caring for those injured, dying and facing starvation.

We continue to call for the immediate release of all remaining Israeli hostages by Hamas and condemn their abuses of human rights.

The ACTU calls on the Australian Government to take immediate steps to secure peace and compliance with international law by:

- Using all influence, pressure, and diplomatic measures – including the use of targeted sanctions - to achieve a permanent ceasefire and pressure the Israeli Government to stop its military operations in Gaza, immediately allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, respect international law and Palestinian's human rights.

- Coordinating with the United Nations, humanitarian organisations, and the international community to support the deployment of a humanitarian convoy to Gaza, and support the immediate, unhindered and safe passage of humanitarian aid.
- Ending all military trade (including parts and components) with Israel, and working with other governments to ensure that Australian exports are not contributing to breaches of international law.
- Supporting international efforts to prosecute violations of international law.
- Establishing emergency humanitarian visa pathways and fast-track all pending visa applications for Palestinians fleeing Gaza.

Recognising the State of Palestine

The ACTU calls for an end to the occupation of Palestine and a just and sustainable peace in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, including the removal of illegal settlements, the withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian lands along with the dismantling of the separation wall. In line with the ACTU's commitment to a two-state solution with the security of borders for both nations, we call on all countries to recognise, without delay, Palestine as a sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This will confirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a free and independent Palestine.

Implementing a two state solution is the path to lasting peace, safety and security for both the peoples of Israel and Palestine.

Resolution 2

Peace

Children and young people have the right to be educated, healthy, housed and free from cultural or economic oppression. An inclusive, equitable and comprehensive public education system is an investment in peace.

The AEU supports all children and young people in their right to be educated, including those for whom the horror of war, has denied them this right.

Further, the AEU supports the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 13(1), ratified by Australia in December 1975;

...Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious

groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.¹

Governments must take responsibility to deliver for children and young people their right to be well educated and live a life free of violence and fear.

Education

Peace education is both about and for peace. It is a field that requires pedagogy and curriculum that is intended to:

- eliminate all forms of violence
- secure a culture of peace building
- develop community and individual empowerment

To be effective, peace education must acknowledge the intersections and interdependencies between global and local manifestations of violence and injustice.³

Through its longstanding commitment to both the peace movement and the rights of children and young people, the AEU has an obligation to ensure teachers have access to resources and tools to educate about and for peace, without fear of censure or reprimand.

Effective peace education relies on teachers having the professional agency to develop and provide teaching and learning experiences which call out the violence and injustice which is at the heart of war and conflict. The agency of teachers and their professional judgement, based on their knowledge, skills, and experience, must be exercised in a way which enables teachers to make decisions and act in the context in which they work. It must be done without AEU members being confined by kneejerk political reactions or limitations on their professional rights.

The genocide in Gaza shows the critical importance of peace education and the role of educators to help students develop critical thinking skills and media literacy to counter the spread of disinformation, and to achieve communities free from conflict, with peaceful relations at the centre.

Action

Education departments and employers must take responsibility to deliver for children and young people on their right to be educated through enacting the agreements in ICESCR, Article 13(1).

The AEU expects employers to support children and students and their teachers and educators to ensure: *the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*¹. ~ (International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13(1))

The AEU calls on the governments and Departments of Education to ensure that:

- AEU members have the resources, guidance and support they need to educate for peace and to engage in respectful discussions with students and colleagues, without fear of hate and discrimination.
- AEU members have a right to engage appropriately and respectfully with their colleagues about community issues, including all global conflicts and in particular, the current conflict in Gaza.
- Teachers and other educators and all those who are enrolled in public education who are impacted by the conflict are provided with the support they need.

The AEU supports the state and territory Branches and Associated Bodies to call on employers to assert the right of union members to educate for Peace through the curriculum without fear of reprisal or employer disciplinary action.

1 *Right to education*. (n.d.). Australian Human Rights Commission. Retrieved November 22, 2023, from <https://declaration.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/right-education#article%2013/>

2 Jenkins, T. (2019). Comprehensive peace education. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of teacher education*. Springer. <https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6>

3 *What is peace education?* (n.d.). Global Campaign for Peace Education. Retrieved November 22, 2023, from <https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/what-is-peace-education/>