

Australia Is ‘Deeply Complicit’ in Gaza Genocide

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Federal Labor and scores of Australian corporations are deeply complicit in Israel’s genocidal attack on Gaza through intelligence feeds from the Pine Gap spy base and military exports.

This complicity goes hand-in-hand with their endorsement of the far-right Benjamin Netanyahu government’s bloody war on Palestinians, in lock-step with the United States and its imperial allies.

Declassified Australia published an [article](#) by investigative journalist Peter Cronau on November 3, which revealed that the Pine Gap US surveillance base, near Alice Springs, is “collecting an enormous range of communications and electronic intelligence from the brutal Gaza-Israel battlefield — and this data is being provided to the Israel Defence Forces”.

David Rosenberg, a former US National Security Agency employee, who worked as team leader of weapon signals analysis at Pine Gap for 18 years until 2008, told Cronau that it is “monitoring the Gaza Strip and surrounding areas with all its resources and gathering intelligence assessed to be useful to Israel”.

“Pine Gap has satellites overhead. Every one of those assets would be on those locations, looking for anything that could help them,” Rosenberg said.

This intelligence can then be used by the Israeli military to target its bombing campaigns, which have already flattened much of Gaza city and [killed about 11,240 Palestinians](#) between October 7 and November 13. Of these, two-thirds are women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Hospitals, schools, homes and refugee camps have been bombed by Israel.

Three human rights organisations — Al-Haq, Al Mezan, and the Palestinian Centre for Human

Rights — have [filed a lawsuit](#) in the International Criminal Court claiming Israel's actions amount to "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity", including "genocide".

Antony Loewenstein, independent journalist and author of *The Palestine Laboratory*, [told Green Left](#) that the *Declassified Australia* report was a "world exclusive" in detailing how Pine Gap is providing real time intelligence to Israel and to the US "that was being used to target alleged Hamas terrorists".

"Israel claims to be pinpointing terrorists, but a blind person can see that's an absolute lie," he said.

"This shows that Australian officials at the highest level are deeply complicit and potentially exposed to war crimes trials in the future because the intelligence they are passing to the Israelis is being used to commit war crimes," said Loewenstein, who co-founded *Declassified Australia*.

"So, on one hand, you have [foreign minister] Penny Wong and [PM Anthony] Albanese saying they support some kind of humanitarian pause and that the Israeli military should take care not to target Palestinian civilians while, at the same time, they know that Pine Gap is complicit in what they are doing."

Declassified Australia's expose went viral internationally, Loewenstein added, yet "not one mainstream media outlet in Australia has picked it up".

"I don't say this is a conspiracy — undoubtedly it's in part down to some turf war because their journalists did not break the story — but there is generally very little reporting in Australia about Pine Gap, considering its importance."

Loewenstein said Australia is willingly complicit in this and the other so-called "wars on terror", and Pine Gap is only part of this complicity.

Bipartisan Support for US Military Expansion

"The project of the former Coalition and the current Labor government is to massively expand the US military footprint in the north of this country, to host more US military assets (both intelligence and actual troops)," Loewenstein said.

"What a lot of people don't know is that, in 2016, there was a conscious decision to expand Australia's weapons industry to try to make Australia one of the world's biggest exporters of arms."

This project began under the Malcolm Turnbull Coalition government, but since Labor came into government "nothing has changed", he said.

One of the most concerning elements of this is the sale of weapons to Israel and Saudi Arabia, the latter which has been carrying out a brutal war against Yemen.

Loewenstein said that over the last few years there have been numerous efforts by some journalists, Greens MPs and anti-war activists to bring some transparency to this growing military exports industry, but "both the former and current government have been unwilling to do so".

“Australia has one of the most unaccountable arms trading systems in the world,” he added. Even the US has a “more transparent system”.

Under questioning by Greens **Senator David Shoebridge**, the Department of Defence told Senate Estimates in late October that the government approved 350 defence export permits to Israel in the past five years, including 50 this year.

However, defence minister **Richard Marles** and his department have refused to reveal how the exports are being used by the Israeli military.

One significant military export to Israel is parts for Israel’s fleet of US funded F-35 stealth fighters, estimated to have cost US\$3 billion so far.

Supplying F-35 Stealth Fighters

Israel has [asked](#) the US for more to bring its F-35 fleet up from 36 to 75. The aircraft are being used in its war on Gaza.

These hi-tech war planes are only supplied to the US’ closest allies, including Australia, and part of this deal involves contracts to Australian companies to join the global F-35 supply chain.

Defence [boasted](#) on October 30 that

“Australian industry is playing an increasingly important role in the production and sustainment of the global F-35 fleet, which has now reached over 975 aircraft of an expected global fleet of over 3000.

“To date more than 70 Australian companies have directly shared more than \$4.13 billion in global F-35 production and sustainment contracts.”

The latest Australian company to win a contract in the F-35 supply chain was Rosebank Engineering, Defence said, which had “activated” its “wheels and brakes repair depot at its Bayswater facility in Melbourne” for F-35s “operating in, or deployed to, the Indo-Pacific Region”.

This latest contract may not service Israel’s F-35s, but Kellie Tranter, who investigated the F-35 supply chain, said earlier contracts have been supplied by Australian or Australian-based companies for: [fuselage](#) and airframe components; communication, navigation and identification systems and software; electro optical distributed aperture system components; landing gear and bomb bay locks; titanium, nickel, aluminium and steel alloys; and flares and magazines.

“Without Australia’s contribution to the F-35 global supply chain, the F-35 wouldn’t get off the ground in the Middle East let alone be capable of bombing civilians in Gaza,” Tranter, a lawyer and human rights activist, told *GL*.

“The F-35 is being used to commit war crimes, by bombing civilians, hospitals etc, and providing aerial support for a murderous ground invasion in Gaza.

“As a [signatory](#) to the [Arms Trade Treaty](#), and as a responsible partner in the F-35 program that knows the uses to which these aircraft are being put in, there’s

absolutely no excuse for the Australian government not to be calling for an immediate ceasefire.”

The companies with these military export contracts receive Australian government grants. For example, Rosebank Engineering received [\\$2.26 million](#).

Michelle Fahy, a researcher on Australia’s growing military exports industry and who has [written extensively](#) on the subject, told *GL* that the government’s “blanket secrecy” about this industry goes beyond security concerns to “protect commercially sensitive information and opportunities for Australian companies”.

Zero Transparency

“With zero transparency, the Australian public has no idea whether our military exports could be being used to commit or facilitate human rights abuses.

“One obvious area of concern, given Australia’s large number of military exports to Israel, is that they likely include drones, components for drones, or related IT.

“Israel is a leader in this field and Australia is also focused on building an international reputation in drone technology and artificial intelligence. The federal government provides significant support for research and development in this area.

“Israel is using drones extensively in its current war on Gaza.”

Fahy has mapped the “revolving door between government and the weapons industry” in a [series](#) of articles published in *Declassified Australia*.

“Successive former Coalition governments granted weapons industry insiders preferential access — a situation that has continued under the Albanese Labor government. This story is also therefore about state capture: what happens when a corporation has the power to bend governments to its will.

“When combined with departmental incompetence, corruption, or both, the result is procurement projects that are billions of dollars over budget and years behind schedule.”

In a bid to bust open the blanket secrecy on military exports, the Palestinian human rights groups, Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights have launched legal action in the Federal Court of Australia.

They are seeking access to all export permits of arms and weapons to Israel granted by the Minister for Defence since October 7. The application is supported by the Australian Centre for International Justice (ACIJ).

Rawan Arraf, ACIJ executive director and solicitor for the Palestinian human rights groups, [said](#):

“Australia’s role in exporting arms material to Israel must be exposed. If Australian-made weapons are being used against Palestinian civilians, our clients and the public deserve to know.

“Countries providing arms to enable Israel’s brutal violence against the Palestinian people must be transparent. And Australia must not be complicit in that violence.”

Greens Senator David Shoebridge told *GL* that if Labor is serious about “taking steps towards a ceasefire, like Senator Wong suggests, then it can start by putting in place an arms embargo and doing an audit to ensure Australia is complying with human rights obligations and the humanitarian law of war.

“Whether it is parts for fighter planes or the direct provisions of artillery shells, it is disturbing that so little is known about Australia’s military support of the war in Gaza.”

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Featured image: Rallying for Palestine in Gadi/Sydney. Photo: Peter Boyle

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