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Australia Palestine Advocacy Network

FACTSHEET

Sanctions on Israel

What Australia has done, and why it must go further

OVERVIEW

Australia must escalate from symbolic, individual sanctions, to meaningful, state-level sanctions that reflect the gravity of Israel's atrocities In the face of credible international findings of war crimes, apartheid and genocide.

The world is taking action, but Australia is falling behind: 12 European countries – including the UK, France and Canada – have announced a fresh ban on trade and sanctions on illegal Israeli settlements. These are the "like-minded" countries that Australia usually takes action with, but now the Australian Government is an outlier. UK Foreign Minister Ed Miliband has strongly denounced "settler terrorists" for carrying out ethnic cleansing in the West Bank. Australia should match these sanctions urgently as a bare minimum.

Australia has made robust use of sanctions against states like Russia, Iran and Myanmar, but its response to Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and illegal occupation of Palestine remains inadequate.

Australia has taken some modest steps by imposing targeted sanctions on:

- 25 July 2024: Seven extremist Israeli settlers and one extremist group involved in violent attacks on Palestinians
- 10 June 2025: National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich
- 2 June 2026: Three additional individuals, Ben Zion Gopstein, Eden Levi and Moshe Sharvit, and four settler outposts: Moshe's Farm, Meitarim Farm, Neria's Farm and Zvi's Farm.

These are welcome but limited steps. They target particular perpetrators and outposts but leave the broader machinery of Israeli apartheid, occupation and genocide untouched.

WHAT ARE SANCTIONS?

Australia's Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011 allows the government to impose thematic sanctions, known as Magnitsky-style sanctions, in cases involving:

- Serious human rights violations.
- Threats to international peace and security.
- Corruption or breaches of the rule of law.

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WHY BROADER SANCTIONS ON ISRAEL ARE URGENT

- The International Court of Justice has found a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza, and invoked the obligation of all third states to ensure "the prevention, suppression and punishment of genocide, by committing themselves to fulfilling the obligations contained in the (Genocide) Convention" (26 January 2024)
- 12 European countries – including the UK, France and Canada – have announced a fresh ban on trade and sanctions on illegal Israeli settlements.
- UN experts have urged third states to impose an arms embargo and sanctions on trade, finance, travel, technology or cooperation (23 February 2024)
- The International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion found Israel's presence in the illegally occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful, that it is breaching laws that prohibit racial segregation and apartheid in illegally occupied Palestine, and that third states are under an obligation not to recognise as legal, or to provide aid or assistance in maintaining, this unlawful situation. (19 July 2024)
- A UN Commission of Inquiry has found Israel is committing the crime against humanity of extermination. (10 October 2024)
- The UN Special Rapporteur for the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory Francesca Albanese recently released a report exposing the corporations aiding Israel in the displacement of Palestinians and its genocidal war on Gaza, in breach of international law, and recommending that states "impose sanctions and a full arms embargo on Israel, including all existing agreements and dual-use items such as technology and civilian heavy machinery; and…suspend or prevent all trade agreements and investment relations, and impose sanctions, including asset freezes, on entities and individuals involved in activities that may endanger the Palestinians."
- Israeli leaders are on record calling for starvation, mass displacement, genocide and the annexation of illegally occupied Palestinian land.
- Genocide, apartheid and illegal occupation are Israeli state policy, not isolated acts by rogue individuals.

> "The State of Israel is predicated on the goal of Palestinian erasure; its entire political system is directed towards this goal. State structures have historically architected the oppression of Palestinians; now its institutions, failing to function as a bulwark, are together advancing the course of the current catastrophe."
>
> *– UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese,* ***Genocide as colonial erasure*** *(paragraph 82), 1 October 2024*

Australia cannot claim to uphold international law while enabling a military apparatus committing a state policy of mass atrocity in illegally occupied Palestine.

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WHAT AUSTRALIA MUST DO NOW

IMPOSE COUNTRY-LEVEL SANCTIONS

- **Impose a two-way arms embargo:** prohibit the export and import of weapons, ammunition, components, military equipment and technology, and dual-use goods supporting military operations, including transfers through third countries.
- **Cut financial support:** prohibit investment, lending, insurance and other financial services supporting Israel's military, genocide and illegal occupation.
- **Ban settlement trade:** prohibit trade in goods and services with illegal settlements, and investment supporting them.
- **Restrict business with complicit companies:** prohibit commercial dealings with entities enabling genocide, illegal settlements and occupation.
- **End military cooperation:** stop joint military research, training, weapons development and technology transfers.

EXPAND TARGETED SANCTIONS

- **Sanction those responsible:** impose asset freezes and financial restrictions on Israeli leaders, military figures, weapons manufacturers and settler-funding organisations responsible for or complicit in serious human rights abuses. Impose travel bans on the individuals.
- **Expand the legal grounds for sanctions:** amend Australia's sanctions regulations to explicitly allow sanctions against people and organisations committing, financing or materially supporting serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes.
- **Target the settlement economy: a**mend the regulations to allow sanctions against people and organisations developing, maintaining or financing illegal settlements, including the E1 project and businesses supporting settlement expansion.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN MP

- **Make a statement** – or join a joint statement with your parliamentary colleagues – demanding that Australia end its complicity in Israel's war crimes, and take a leadership position towards accountability for Israel, by imposing country-level sanctions on Israel.
- **Move or support motions** for full sanctions and a two-way arms embargo.
- **Ask a Question on Notice, or in Question Time**, calling for transparency on arms exports, and for consistency in Australia's sanctions regime – comparing sanctions on Russia to the lack of sanctions on Israel.
- **Share your constituents' concerns** about Australia's failure to impose sanctions in parliament, or with your party.
- **Engage with civil society groups** calling for accountability and action.
- **Support the Red Lines Package** of legal safeguards to close the legislative loopholes that enable Australia's complicity in Israel's crimes by:
  - Ensuring that defence-related businesses report on genocide risks in their supply chains.
  - Stopping Australian charities and funds – including the Future Fund – from investing in businesses operating in illegal Israeli settlements.
  - Ban defence exports linked to genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity.

APAN is here to support you. Please contact us at any time to arrange a briefing, for support with statements, speeches, motions and research.

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WHAT AUSTRALIA TRADES WITH ISRAEL – AND MUST STOP

- **Trading goods and services with Israel:** Australian exports totalled $292.3 million in 2025, while imports totalled $935.6 million, including $42.7 million in arms and ammunition.
- **Permitting trade with illegal settlements:** Restrictions apply to specifically sanctioned individuals and entities, but Australia has not prohibited settlement trade more broadly. In September 2026, the Australian Government declined to pursue a comprehensive settlement goods import ban. This leaves trade supporting the settlement economy outside the scope of those targeted restrictions.
- **Supplying F-35 fighter jet components:** Australia contributes to the global supply chain supporting Israel's F-35 fleet. Declassified Australia's August 2026 investigation reported further shipments from Australia to Israel through the United States, with documented exports extending to February 2026. Amnesty International has documented Israel's use of F-35s in its genocide in Gaza, including strikes on designated safe zones.
- **Providing Australian weapons technology for Israeli military trials:** In April 2025, the ABC revealed that Israel's military had trialled an Australian-designed EOS remote weapon system capable of firing a 30mm cannon. An industry source said Australian-made components were sent to the United States for assembly before transfer to Israel. The reporting established military trials, rather than confirmed deployment in Gaza.
- **Investing public money in military suppliers:** At **30 June 2026**, the Future Fund held **$19.7 million in Elbit Systems** and **$114.6 million in Palantir**, having purchased additional shares in both during the preceding six months. Elbit supplies weapons to Israel's military, while Palantir supplies technology supporting its military operations.
- **Investing in banks linked to illegal settlements:** Reporting in 2026 identified **$72.2 million in Future Fund holdings in Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi and Israel Discount Bank**, banks named in the UN database of businesses involved in settlement activity. These investments connect Australian public money to the financial infrastructure sustaining illegal settlements.
- **Awarding contracts to Israeli arms suppliers:** Elbit Systems secured a **A$917m Australian Government contract**, **announced in February 2024**, to supply systems through Hanwha Defence Australia for the Army's Redback infantry fighting vehicles. Elbit also manufactured the Hermes drone reportedly used to kill Australian aid worker Zomi Frankcom and six World Central Kitchen colleagues in April 2024. Furthermore, there is at least $213 million invested into Israeli banks by Australian superannuation funds.
- **Maintaining defence and security cooperation:** Bilateral arrangements include memorandums on defence industry cooperation signed in **2017** and cyber security cooperation signed in **2019**, alongside strategic defence engagement.
- **Australia also exports military goods and components to Israel,** including a DroneShield gun and a Australian designed and built remote weapon system, which was transferred via the US. Five of the weapons companies involved in Australia's "Global Supply Chain" export program have explicitly been called out by UN experts as supplying Israel.
- **Investing in companies identified by the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** as helping to maintain Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid. Australia's Future Fund holds more than $102 million in shares in such companies.