

'GENOCIDE REPORT' IS LACKING 'LEGAL RIGOUR'

ECAJ slams UN commission

AJN STAFF

THE Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) has strongly condemned a UN Human Rights Council report accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza, dismissing it as lacking "any semblance of legal rigour or moral authority".

The report by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry, released last week, accused Israel of committing four of the five genocidal acts defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Commission chair Navi Pillay said, "It is clear that there is an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria set forth in the Genocide Convention."

Pillay has in the past dismissed concerns about antisemitism as "a diversion" and "lies", and labelled Israel's security concerns "a fiction". She also defended comments by her fellow commissioner Miloon Kothari, who in 2022 claimed social media was "controlled largely by the Jewish lobby".

ECAJ president Daniel Aghion said the report was "a collection of allegations, reports and opinions that have never been tested in any court of law".

"No witnesses have been sworn, examined and cross-examined, and



From left: UN commissioners Chris Sidoti, Navi Pillay and Miloon Kothari.

Photo: Luke Tress/Times of Israel

no contrary or exculpatory evidence has been considered in any kind of judicial process," Aghion said.

Aghion argued that civilian deaths in war, even on a large scale, did not constitute genocide unless certain criteria were met, noting the report only referred to "reasonable grounds" for concluding those criteria had been satisfied.

"There is abundant evidence that, even when it is militarily disadvantageous for it to do so, Israel in conducting a war of self-defence has moved Palestinians out of harm's way before an attack, given advance warnings of strikes at specific locations, set up humanitarian corridors, and facilitated the flow of aid," he said.

He also criticised the commission's composition, noting it consisted of "three individuals who have a long prior record of antipathy and prejudice towards Israel,

and have not even pretended to be impartial".

Aghion pointed to the recent study by the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies that "concluded definitively that there is no evidence of a systematic Israeli policy of targeting or massacring civilians".

The ECAJ president also referenced former International Court of Justice president Joan Donoghue's clarification that the ICJ had not found genocide claims against Israel to be "plausible", despite media reports to the contrary.

Israel's Foreign Ministry immediately rejected the report, saying it came from " Hamas proxies, notorious for their openly antisemitic position".

"The report relies entirely on Hamas falsehoods, laundered and repeated by others," the ministry wrote.

CHANGEMAKERS 2025

Nominations closing

AJN STAFF

MEMBERS of the community have until Tuesday, September 30 to nominate their peers for this year's top 36 Youth & Young Adult Jewish Changemakers.

Since 2013, the awards have been shining a spotlight on young leaders in our community who are delivering positive change through leadership, innovation and service.

JNF project coordinator Etty Ayalon said the awards are even more significant this year.

"In these difficult times, the role of young changemakers has never been more important. These awards recognise those inspiring young leaders who are contributing to our community, and supporting Jewish solidarity and resilience," she said.

Changemakers embody commitment and passion, having a meaningful impact driving positive change – whether supporting the Jewish community, fostering connections with Israel, or contributing to Australian society.

There are three award categories: a Youth Volunteer Award for under 18s, a Young Adult Award for volunteers aged 18-36, and a Joshua Levi Young Professional Award for professionals aged 18-36.

Nominations are evaluated by a panel of esteemed judges. The



Last year's Joshua Levi Young Professional Award winner, Chavi-Block-Israel.

winners in each category also receive a cash prize ranging from \$1500 to \$5000.

AJN editor-in-chief Gareth Narunsky said *The AJN* is proud to support the awards again this year "and help expand their reach and impact in the Jewish community".

The awards are supported by JNF Australia, B'nai B'rith, *The AJN* and for the first time, this year, a new partner in the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ).

ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim said, "After several years on the judging panel, I am pleased the ECAJ is supporting the awards this year and helping shine a light on our community's inspiring young leaders."

Nominations close on September 30: jnf.org.au/changemakers

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