

PALM SUNDAY Rally and March for Peace

**March 16, 2008
Parramatta, 1.30 pm**

All Troops Out of Iraq!
Democracy not war for Iran!
Political solution for Afghanistan
**making Australia a global
citizen again!**



Amphitheatre at Parramatta Town Hall

1.30pm - Palm Sunday Service and Multi-Faith Prayers for Peace

Rev Dr Niall Reid, Moderator, Uniting Church Ken Stewart & the Urban Guerrillas

2.10 pm - March through Parramatta then rally



Sponsored by NSW Ecumenical Council

Organised by Sydney Peace & Justice Coalition www.nswpeace.org

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Making Australia a global citizen again ...

Our defeat of the Howard Coalition government in November 2007 ended Australia's commitment to George Bush's 'coalition of the killing' in Iraq. Over 600 Australian combat troops will be withdrawn from Iraq by June this year.

In December 2007, in Bali, Australia broke with Bush and ratified the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Climate Change Convention – to the acclaim of the world community.

In January 2008, Australia told India that there would be no uranium sales because India had not ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty.

Through the people's voice, Australia is again becoming a global citizen, upholding international law. Our peace movement can go further down this road in 2008 if we grasp the new opportunities.

All troops out of Iraq!

Civilians and soldiers continue to die in huge numbers in Iraq because the Bush Administration and its dwindling allies want to 'save face', and secure long-term access to Iraqi oil. As well, thousands of Iranian special forces fight a hidden war against the USA in Iraq and to control a future Iraqi government. All foreign troops should withdraw and allow Iraqi political forces to negotiate a settlement for their long-term independent development. Reconstruction aid should come through a UN coordinated effort, at the request of a representative Iraqi government.

Support the Iranian people's movements for democracy, equality and freedom - not war!

The 80 million Iranian people have been brutally repressed by the fundamentalist clerical dictatorship in Tehran for 29 years. Over 120,000 political prisoners have been executed. Threats by the Bush Administration to attack or invade only help this dictatorship to appeal to patriotism. Australia, the USA and Europe also help the mullahs by branding the democratic resistance as 'terrorist'. The movements of students, women and workers in Iran are escalating their protests – at great risk – to call for democracy, equality and freedom in a modern, secular Iran. The majority of Iranians oppose war and dictatorship. The Australian peace and justice movement must campaign to have the Rudd government take the democratic resistance in Iran off the 'terrorist' list, and extend real solidarity to them.

Political solution for Afghanistan – all troops out!

There are over 1000 Australian soldiers fighting in southern Afghanistan, and in the last six months three of them have been killed, and they have killed civilians. Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon, while affirming the Rudd Labor government's long term commitment to the war, has bluntly stated that there is 'no strategy', no measures are being taken to stop the massive heroin exports, and Australia has had no say in the conduct of the war. The Afghan government is quietly negotiating with the Taliban. This is not a war for 'freedom and democracy', but another part of the Bush-Cheney war for oil and domination of the Middle East. The Rudd Labor government should push strongly for a ceasefire and negotiated political solution. Maybe then Osama bin Laden might even be arrested!

Gaza – Palestine - Lebanon on the edge of disaster

The Palestinian people surviving the siege of the Gaza Strip, and facing The Wall and the settlements in the West Bank live, under a 31 year Israeli occupation which is heavily subsidised by the Bush Administration, and supported by Europe and Australia. There is no 'peace plan', no negotiations. Instead whole populations are defined as 'terrorists' and ground down by economic strangulation, bombardment and selective assassinations.

In the tension between Iran and the USA, Lebanon is being torn apart, and stands on the brink of civil war.

Australia must become a voice which condemns this inhumanity and calls for an end to occupation and for a real peace in the Middle East.

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