

# STAND UP TO TEHRAN TERROR

## HOPE IN CANCER FIGHT

With the dangers of a wider Middle East conflict now at a dramatic tipping point after Iran's attacks on Israel, protesters should rethink their positions.

Not that there's much chance the pro-Palestinian movement with its eclectic collection of activists blockading city intersections, engineering companies and ports will bother about the wider picture.

While demonstrations calling for a Gaza ceasefire and greater humanitarian aid are one thing, the anti-Israel protest movements in Australia and across Western democracies seemingly refuse to acknowledge who sparked the war and continue to stoke the flames of a wider conflagration.

The protest call from a free Palestine movement "from the river to the sea" is in effect a rallying cry for the end of Israel – the only functioning democracy in the Middle East – as a state.

Demonstrators seem unwilling to recognise the extensive planning and decision-making by Hamas in carrying out perhaps the most barbaric and brutal of terror attacks on civilians in the modern era, and the terrorist group's stated vow to wipe Israel off the map.

Hundreds of protesters caused traffic chaos in Melbourne yesterday, and police arrested demonstrators for tampering with traffic lights and blocking roads while crowds rallied outside parliament, in Hoddle St, outside a defence facility in Port Melbourne and at an intersection in Coburg.

Under the international A15 protest banner, the organising website calls on people to disrupt businesses, claiming the "global economy is complicit in genocide".

"Join participating cities in blocking the arteries of capitalism and jamming the wheels of production," it declares.

A previous port shutdown in Melbourne is highlighted by A15 as a good example on how to “choke” an economy.

While the civilian casualties in Gaza have been horrific, due in large part to Hamas’s cruel and illegal use of human shields and its use of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, for military operations, Israel’s right to self defence is inarguable, as is its quest to secure release of the remaining 134 hostages Hamas took, amid a stated aim to remove Hamas as an ongoing threat.

Of course, the much-hyped A15 protests in Melbourne and elsewhere took to the streets just a day after Iran – the world’s biggest sponsor of terrorism, and a Hamas facilitator – launched a barrage of 185 bomb drones, 110 surface-to-surface missiles and 36 cruise missiles originating from Iran, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon at Israel.

While 99 per cent of the missiles and drones were taken out by the Israeli Defence Forces, with assistance from jet fighters and air defence from the US, Britain, France and, importantly Jordan, the first direct attack by Iran on Israel risks an immediate widening of the conflict.

Despite the scale of the Iranian operation, it was a tactical failure and analysts believe was directed more at assuaging Iran’s domestic hardliners. But if Iranian-backed Hezbollah ups its rocket attacks significantly, or attempts incursions, a powder keg scenario could quickly develop.

Already, Israel faces multiple fronts against Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, the Houthis and Iraqi Shia militia.

In response, the Albanese government needs to sharpen its trade and political sanctions on Tehran and, finally, act on senate calls to proscribe the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation.

As Iran continues to pursue nuclear weapons, the free world cannot allow Tehran to continue its program of terror and destabilisation.

Melbourne is again making its mark as an international leader in health sciences and research.

As reported in today’s Herald Sun, an Australian-first specialist childhood research laboratory has opened in Clayton and will seek to forge new inroads into a range of cancers that threaten young lives across the world.

What began as a wish by three Victorian families to renovate a hospital ward has now become a multimillion-dollar charity aiming to pioneer new treatments.

Indeed, its vision is that with robust funding and dedicated research, there is hope of finding a cure for childhood cancer.

Funded by the My Room Children's Cancer Charity and located at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, the My Room laboratory head and inaugural fellow Jason Cain believes the goal is achievable.

"We 100 per cent want to find a cure for childhood cancer. We are working towards that," Professor Cain tells the Herald Sun.

With research into childhood sarcoma, where survival rates have been stagnant for years, the new laboratory will be funded for the next five years with a \$2.25m gift from the charity.

It provides real hope we can advance our understanding and ultimately save young lives.