

Protests across UK against Israel's massacre of Palestinians

Our reporters
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Protests were held throughout the UK Tuesday evening over Monday's systematic massacre by the Israel Defense Forces of over 60 unarmed men, women and children, and the wounding of thousands more. The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to demonstrators Tuesday evening in a number of cities.

In London, several hundred people protested outside Downing Street. Kirk attended with his cousin and her daughter. He said, "We were gutted by what we saw on the news, with the very harsh repression against the protesters in Palestine. The children getting hit and maimed by the Israeli military, it shocked me, just the scale of it over the past days.

"Those responsible should be arrested and brought before a war crimes tribunal. They committed atrocities against civilians who were in a peaceful protest."

Around 200 people protested outside Manchester Central Library in St Peter's Square. Replica coffins were laid out with names on them of some of the victims of the massacre. After holding a minute's silence, demonstrators marched down the city's Oxford Road, where students at the University of Manchester joined the protest.

Sam first became aware of Israel's repression of the Palestinians 10 years ago, after seeing a demonstration in the UK. "I have since done a politics and international relations degree and learnt about it," she said. "You wouldn't know about anything from the mainstream media and the information that people normally access. It doesn't reflect the reality.

"It's important to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians as it's a human rights issue and it's not fair to say that everyone who criticises genocide is anti-Semitic.

"We're here at the University of Manchester and we want to let them know that we don't agree with them

profiting from genocide. The university is meant to be promoting human rights and education and good values."

Graphene technology developed by Manchester University was supplied to an Israeli arms manufacturer, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

"I think it's just nonsense about interventions on human rights. I was naïve before I studied it. I thought maybe the Iraq war would help people in Iraq. But the US and Britain care more about profits than they care about people's lives.

"There's a lot of social divisions in Israel. Some people are living in these beautiful houses and these amazing complexes having full medical care and education. And then you've got Palestinian people with no electricity, no medical treatment, who have no work and are under curfew.

"Democracies are supposed to represent people and have some kind of mandate, but it seems like there are lots of Jewish people who don't agree with what Israel is doing. I know a Jewish woman and she said she can't go and live in Israel because she just can't face the fact that this is happening and she feels powerless to stop it.

"We have to protest. Voting is not enough. There are international issues, and I don't just care about people in Manchester, I care about people across the world."

WSWS reporters raised the clamp-down on social media, socialist and anti-war websites being carried out under the guise of combatting "fake news". Sam said, "I used to work in the BBC and I know they didn't always report accurately, whether intentionally or otherwise. The media have a lot to answer for as well as the politicians."

John said, "It's really out of order what the Israeli state is doing in Gaza. This is a continuation of what

has been going on for 70 years.

“It’s not the Israeli people who have done this, but the Israeli regime. When we campaign against regimes, we are not campaigning against the citizens. No one is anti-Israeli or anti-Jewish.”

Speaking about the campaign against Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn by his party’s right wing, John said, “He’s clearly not anti-Semitic. They are scrambling around to find anything to weaken Corbyn. Let’s not pretend that Labour is a left-wing party. I think Corbyn is left-wing, but Labour doesn’t have a left-wing history.”

Asked his thoughts on the United States opening an Embassy in Jerusalem on the day of the massacre, he said, “If you look at the US attitude to Israel, the UK attitude, and various states in Europe, they are supporting Israeli oppression in Palestine. And they have been for a long time.”

Ensaf said, “I am here to show that the world hasn’t forgotten the Palestinian people. If you allow these things to go on there, then you are allowing it to go on anywhere in the world. It is not just the US and the UK backing Israel. I’m a Muslim and it’s also countries like Saudi Arabia that allow this to happen.”

Jasmine said, “The atrocities by Israel against the Palestinians in the last few days are the worst we’ve seen in years. It’s just lies. Israel does not need protection. It needs to bring down the prison that it’s locked an enormous number of people in.

“You’ve had an eight-month-old baby killed, suffocated by tear gas. There are protesters in wheelchairs being killed. We have to restore humanity to these people. People are watching them being killed and it is de-humanising. Israel wasn’t just formed out of nowhere. In doing so, 750,000 people were displaced.”

Erica was at the Manchester rally from the Jewish Socialists Group. She said, “I’ve been involved since the 1980s in support for Palestinians and clarifying that it’s perfectly possible to be anti-Zionist without being anti-Semitic. In this current moment, it’s very important to keep saying that because that is part of the Israeli state’s propaganda.”

Asked why she thought the repression had been stepped up, Erica said, “Well they have got the go-ahead from [US President] Trump haven’t they? There is a hardening of all the positions and it’s very tragic.”

In Sheffield, Zain, a student in politics, sociology and psychology said: “The US moving its embassy to Jerusalem and recognising it as the capital of Israel caused uproar, and rightly so. Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine. Israel is the occupier, and Palestinians are denied any rights.

“The BBC and the media have been very biased and are concealing the truth. Parliament is meant to represent the people, but in a capitalist society they do not represent the people. The government will not bat an eyelid at this type of protest.

“In America, a lot of people were killed protesting against the Vietnam war. The US had to end the war because it had become an internal conflict. We do need an anti-war movement. We now stand on the brink of a major war. They are just waiting for Russia to retaliate.

“Abraham Lincoln said that America could not be defeated by any foreign country, only by itself, through internal conflict. With all the gun violence and school shootings, America is destroying itself.”

Zain had followed the strikes by teachers in various US states. “They have been treated terribly. Teachers should be glorified. They make a vital contribution to society. Instead, I have seen videos where teachers pay for resources out of their own wages, leaving them out-of-pocket so students do not go without.

“Karl Marx wrote at a time of the industrialisation of Britain. The divisions are not so apparent today, but there is definitely class conflict. I think Trotsky was amazing.”



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