

Thousands protest outside Israeli embassy in London in solidarity with Palestinians

Our reporters
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Several thousand people attended an emergency protest outside the Israeli embassy in London Monday evening to show their solidarity with the Palestinians and oppose the Israeli onslaught on Gaza. A high proportion of young people and families, many with links to Palestine or the wider Middle East, took part.

They were met by a heavy police presence including ranks of police vans and armed officers.

The night before, Home Secretary Suella Braverman had threatened, “I expect the police to use the full force of the law against displays of support for Hamas, other proscribed terrorist groups or attempts to intimidate British Jews.”

The day after the protest, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in relation to the London and other protests, “I’d just remind everyone that Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation. People should not be supporting Hamas and we will make sure that we hold people to account if they are.”

A national demonstration is due to march past Sunak’s official residence in Downing Street, London on Saturday.

World Socialist Web Site reporters and members of the Socialist Equality Party attended Monday’s protest, distributing copies of the International Committee of the Fourth International statement, “Down with Netanyahu’s government! Stop the imperialist-backed Zionist onslaught against Gaza!” and speaking to those in attendance.

Karin, who works in London as a chef, explained, “From a young age, when I was 8 years old, I have been demonstrating, including in Palestine. It all goes back to 75 years ago when Israel occupied Palestine.

“Netanyahu does not own that land. The Palestinians have the right to go back home.

“Israel have killed huge numbers of kids, of

Palestinians, elders. They even bombed hospitals. And it is all funded by America.

“I don’t care what Hamas does to Israel now. I really care about the Israeli people, the normal people, the working class people. Because it’s not their fault, it’s the government. They were just born there, they do not know what is happening, it is the government.”

Ghada Al Camelia, whose stepfather is from Jerusalem and mother from Lebanon, said, “They consider an Israeli life more important than a Palestinian life because Israel was born out of a racist ideology. If they really want peace, you cannot steal someone’s land or their house and claim you want peace without returning that theft.

“I saw the video of the Prime Minister of Israel Netanyahu saying the Palestinians can flee as he threatened to reduce Gaza to ash. He knows they cannot flee because of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers and the borders, because of all of these things.

“There is no grey areas in this conflict: it is black and white. You can see the footage against the Israeli propaganda and what is the truth. When you see Palestinian kids being massacred, throwing rocks against tanks.

“You can see the difference in the narrative when it comes to Hamas as a terrorist organisation and the Ukraine-Russia war. The Ukrainian soldiers are referred to as heroes, but why are Arabs in Palestine referred to as terrorists when they are defending and fighting for the freedom of their people to bring down the borders.

“This narrative of Muslim against Jews, we have always lived and co-existed with each other in a peaceful manner. That was a narrative created by the West. So they could perpetrate war crimes and say it is the people’s religions which are creating these

problems instead of them.

“I don’t want to come at it from an emotional standpoint, but it is emotional for me because it is my people who are dying. My father was stopped from returning to Jerusalem but any Jew born anywhere has the right to take a property, take a land and have a whole life there.”

Asked about the campaign to portray criticism of Israel and its murderous policies as anti-Semitism, Ghada replied, “There is nothing more anti-Semitic than Zionism. We have met multiple Jewish people who are anti-Zionist and they are open about it. A girl at my work, she is Ukrainian-Jewish, she was born in Israel. She is the biggest pro-Palestinian person I have met. Her family left Israel because they saw the corruption of their government and the oppression with their own eyes.

“People are afraid to say the wrong thing sometimes on the conflict when they are not too heavily aware of the situation. If you don’t know too much about it, they see the headlines ‘Attacks on Israelis’, and they say, ‘I don’t want violence on both sides.’

“But offer another solution. How long has this gone on for, what are we supposed to do? Offer the solutions here in the West and maybe we can take them.”

Zatara, an electrician, told our reporter, “I have come to support the innocent people who are dying in Palestine. The fighters are not terrorists they are defending their country. Now Israel has the excuse to kill all Palestinians and take over all of Gaza.

“Israel has been taking over Palestine for a very, very long time but the news coverage does not show that. They keep calling the Palestinians terrorists and saying that Israel has a ‘right to defend itself’, and now Palestine is almost taken over. They are fighting back.

“As Muslims, we do not condone killing or war, but we do have a right to defend ourselves.

“The media keep making the Muslims look bad and not portraying Israel for what they are and what they are doing. If they keep pushing and pushing for war the world will end up having a World War Three. Russia will not have it and the Middle East will not have it and the Europeans are getting involved and it will be chaos. They need to back off.”

Tariq, a driver, warned, “There is worse to come. Netanyahu is saying terrible things, calling Palestinians animals, threatening violence like we’ve never seen.

He has been threatening like this for a long time but now it is even more.”

Told about the United States sending a carrier strike group to the Eastern Mediterranean to support Israel, Tariq said, “I did not know that. That concerns me even more. It’s like I am saying, we’re just at the beginning. And we need more people to protest, now, immediately, to stop this. To stop Israel.

“There is no equivalence between the Israel and the Palestinian side. We are fighting against years and years of suffering, of dispossession. They want to destroy us. We are saying to the world, and to the Israeli people, you cannot support this, you cannot ignore this. We are here and we are fighting for our lives. We want their support.”

Speaking about the slandering of supporters of the Palestinians as anti-Semites and terrorist supporters he said, “It’s a lie. They use it to scare people, to make them the bad guys. But it is not a crime to oppose Israel, it is a crime to support it.”



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