

Tens of thousands protest Israel's war in cities throughout the UK

Our reporters
15 October 2023

As well as a national demonstration of over 150,000 people in London, protestors in their thousands joined local rallies across the UK, in an outpouring of opposition to Israel's war on the Palestinians. *World Socialist Web Site* reporters spoke with demonstrators in Manchester, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Bradford, and Leeds.

Manchester

Zahra said, "They've cornered the people in Gaza, they're doing a clean out of helpless people. And America and England sending warships, it's a genocide. My bottom line is, it's World War Three, and anything could trigger it. America could drop something, and Russia will do the same. People have to do something."

Young lawyer **Khalid** explained, "I am upset and terrified for the children getting bombed in Gaza. Civilians are being killed on all sides. We should be getting together to save the planet. Who suffers? It's always the people! It's Palestinians today, and everyone tomorrow."

School student **Myra** said, "It's not an invasion by Hamas, it's a rightful resistance to a brutal occupation by a racist, apartheid regime. It's genocide—the people can't evacuate."

Malaak, a Macmillan welfare rights worker, said, "The gap between the Tories and Labour has never been so narrow. Keir Starmer used to be a human rights lawyer! But he apparently doesn't know that killing children is not self-defence."

College student **Zina** from Iraq said, "This conflict's been going on for 70 years plus. It's about basic human rights, seeing videos of children being murdered. We have to be the voice of people with no electricity. They are condemning Palestinians to genocide, bombing safe routes."

Sheffield

Yasser, an Amazon worker, said, "There's an outcry for Ukraine's defence, but nothing for Palestine, where the situation has been going on for 75 years.

"These wars are geopolitical. The US and most European governments have got a problem with Russia. They're friendly with Israel. This is a worldwide struggle against the corrupt powers-that-be. If the majority gets together then we'll have the power.

"We're standing up for the human rights of all people, regardless of race or religion. We want freedom for the people of Palestine who've been under siege for generations. The politicians of Israel are switching off the gas, electricity, and food supply for 2.3 million people in Gaza.

That is collective punishment and a war crime. I'm absolutely disgusted that the Labour leader Keir Starmer supports that.

"Israel has a free pass to commit atrocities. They're not answerable to anyone. The politicians are turning a blind eye to war crimes in the 21st century. I definitely support uniting the working class internationally! The majority are on the right side—supporting freedom for Palestine.

"I'm disgusted that Home Secretary Suella Braverman has called for the flying of the Palestinian flag to be banned. This country likes to champion freedom of speech, but how can this be a criminal offence? The Palestinian flag is a symbol of the struggle of the people."

Abdallah, a teacher, said, "I am Palestinian. What I see in the Gaza strip is a crime against humanity and all international laws. It is a collective punishment for children and women, not for Hamas. The Israeli military is destroying hospitals. The Israelis told hospital managers to leave and empty the hospitals, but where can they go?

"This has been going on in Gaza for 17 years. It is a concentration camp. I received a message yesterday from a friend in Gaza who lost his eight-year-old niece. She was playing in her house by the window when the house was attacked. The girl fell from the window. They could not recognise her afterwards.

"The Palestinians are supported by people around the world, but not from the governments. The US government is sending its warships there. The British government is sending warships. They all support Israel."

Frank said, "The actions that the UK government are supporting are abhorrent. They're not in the name of any working-class person of Britain. They're done in the name of imperialism. They're done in the name of genocide.

"The Labour Party are the same imperialist party that they've always been. They've always supported NATO. They've always supported US interests. They've always supported intervention in other people's business.

"Working-class people have got to stand against this sort of torment. What happens to Palestinians ...they're the same class as me. It could easily happen to me. It's about time working-class people stood together, whatever religion, creed, sex, race, it doesn't matter."

Yosuf, a student, said, "No-one in the world is supporting Israel other than the big powers and their allies. It is mass genocide. For years the Palestinians have been robbed of basic human necessities. I know the Palestinians are not terrorists. I know friends who have family who have been killed in Palestine. I have relatives that have been victims."

Aaamer said, "The Palestinians are fighting for one thing, to get their homeland back. This has nothing to do with Judaism. It is the state of Israel that is Zionist. It is terrorism."

Daniel Bustamante said, "I come from Chile, the country upon which the West imposed a military dictatorship in 1973. The Israeli government provided weapons for that Nazi dictatorship to kill the Chilean people.

"Humanity is being destroyed around the world by war after war. Israel's actions are enticing the Arab countries to react, risking launching

us into a third world war.

“Keir Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, has announced his support for the Israeli blockade of supplies into the Palestinian Occupied Territories. We should have our own strategy and culture. The elite can say whatever they want through the fake news media, which they own, to push us towards war. We don’t have our own method of communication. The so-called ‘left’ is pro-war and against the working class.”

Daniel said, “America and Britain are completely hypocritical in giving Israel a blank cheque to attack the Palestinians. It’s disgusting how they’re promoting ignorance of the historic oppression of the Palestinian people.

“I’ve got friends there and have visited many times. The media propaganda is so different from reality on the ground. The headlines are of Israeli deaths and ignore Palestinian casualties in Gaza, who have been bombed.

“I’m disgusted how the Tories and Labour Party support the siege of the Palestinians. It doesn’t reflect the opinion of most British people. It puts the witch-hunt against a whole wing of their party into a new light. They’ve cast out anyone who opposes this foreign policy.”

Alan said, “The US and European countries have given Israel permission to commit war crimes because of geopolitical reasons. They want to maintain a power base in the Middle East. The Israeli, Saudi, and Gulf states are carving up the region—there’s no room for the Palestinians. The poor buggers deserve a proper homeland, not just a camp.”

Huddersfield

Ayesha said, “They are giving a rerun of what the Nazis did. Even when they, the Israeli government, say you can leave by this route they then bomb them. The support by all the western governments is disgusting.”

Gopal and **Raja** from Kashmir, India explained, “The situation in Gaza is like what is happening in Kashmir. It is illegally occupied. There are no human rights there. There is no such thing as democracy—you don’t have the right to protest or do a lot of things which a democratic country should enjoy.

“We are not allowed to leave our homes, to move freely on the streets. If we travel you will be asked, ‘where are you going and why’, to show our ID cards. They have special powers where if they suspect you of anything they can kill you without being asked to explain.”

Bradford

Isabelle a hairdressing student, said, “I think the support for Israel and propaganda being pushed out is totally wrong, no one should be bombing anyone. I have told everyone I know about what is happening in Gaza and why.”

Issy, 16, said, “There is a massive double standard, Ukraine is getting praised, and Palestine is getting demonised. The people of Palestine should be able to fight back. People need to fight for Palestine, they can’t fight for themselves.”

Mariam, a university student, said, “What is going on is a genocide and apartheid. This has been going on for decades. The fight is one-sided. I don’t think it is a fair fight at all. Hundreds of children and adults are being killed in Gaza right now. It is time for Palestinian people to fight back and get their rights.”

Leeds

Haleema said, “Everything that you’ve seen in the media is twisted. The Palestinians are the ones who are burning. They have barely survived and have got nothing left.

“They told people to leave Gaza City and then they’re killing them on their way. It reminds me of what happened to the Jews during the Second World War, like in Poland. It’s the same kind of techniques. Giving them false hope about the Warsaw ghetto.

“The violence of the oppressor and of the oppressed are not the same thing. That’s what the media aren’t looking at. They are not seeing that the Palestinians are just fighting for survival.

“The Canadian parliament gave a standing ovation to a veteran from Hitler’s Waffen SS. That is shocking. It just shows that the world hasn’t changed as much as we thought it had since the Holocaust.

“And a Palestinian life is not worth enough compared to a Ukrainian. But a life is a life, a child is a child. What is the reason for the [West’s] support for Ukraine and for Israel, what is the ulterior motive behind it?”

Sarah, a student said, “My sign says ‘End the Genocide’ because what we’re seeing now is that the Palestinians face a siege by air, by land and by sea. There’s no way for them to get out.

“We’ve had almost 2,000 Palestinians killed by Israel in the last week, and I’m here just to call for an end to that. Politicians and government leaders are calling what happened in Israel absolutely awful but they won’t condemn the crimes of the Israeli government against the Palestinians.

“There are politicians here saying that waving a Palestinian flag should be a crime. There’s been the occupation of Palestine for 75 years now. There have been war crimes committed through the entirety of that time. Western leaders don’t call for an end to that, but when they said Russia was committing war crimes on Ukrainians they were up in arms.

“Power is with the people at the top, and they don’t care about people like us, ordinary people. America has blood on its hands, and the United Kingdom as well.”

Ahmed, originally from Morocco, said, “Israel is pretending that they are targeting Hamas, but it is so clear that they are targeting innocent people.

“Everyone knows that it’s the land of the Palestinians, it’s not the land of Israel. For them, the blood of Israelis is valuable but the blood of the Palestinians is not. Really they want to kill all Palestinians.”

Jasmine said, “Israel was created illegitimately through ethnic cleansing and terrorism, genocide and massacres. Ever since it was created, it has been maintained through apartheid and racism and human rights abuses and they get away with their crimes with complete impunity.

“They have an extreme right-wing, fascist and Zionist ideology, based on a superiority complex. They operate a system of apartheid based on discrimination and human rights abuses against the Palestinians.

“Palestinians are being held in concentration camps. We believe in human rights for people all over the world of all faiths and no faith. The resources of the world should be used to benefit people and not be used to support Israel’s terrorism.

“They are using white phosphorus on innocent people. The Palestinians are left with no other choice because they are facing a brutal military occupation. Half the population of Gaza are children.

“The US and other big powers have always supported Israel because it’s their terrorist base in the Middle East. They give billions of dollars to Israel even though the housing in America is appalling and the health system doesn’t support millions of people. People on the ground are suffering in terms of health and education while the rich are getting richer. It’s a war on two fronts.”



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