

Tens of thousands demonstrate in Germany against the genocide in Gaza

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Despite attempts by the government, authorities and media to criminalise all protests against the genocide in Gaza and defame them as “antisemitic,” numerous rallies and demonstrations continue to take place throughout Germany.

In Berlin alone, over 5,000 people joined a protest march from Kreuzberg to Neukölln last Saturday. The police deployed a large contingent of 900 officers and stopped the demonstration temporarily.

On the same day, 1,300 people gathered in Stuttgart, 400 each in Mannheim and Karlsruhe. One thousand people demonstrated in Münster, 500 in Saarbrücken and 300 in Cologne. In Hamburg, a general ban was imposed on pro-Palestine demonstrations and a demonstration with 300 participants was broken up by the police. Violators of the ban face a fine of up to €500.

The largest gathering took place in Düsseldorf, where almost 10,000 people demonstrated their solidarity with the Palestinians. There was a strong police presence at the protest, but it proceeded peacefully. The protest march against the genocide in Gaza took three hours to move from the main railway station via the Königsallee boulevard to the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament.

The protest was international. On banners and many self-made posters, in German and English, participants demanded an immediate halt to the murder of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip. “Bombing innocent children is not self-defence,” read one of the posters. Demonstrators spoke out against genocide, antisemitism and violence and for peace and justice.

Several placards pointed out the complicity of the other Arab states and especially the German government, “Germany finances—Israel bombs!” they proclaimed.

Doctors and healthcare workers from a total of 10 specialist professional and medical associations expressed their solidarity with their colleagues in Gaza, more than two dozen of whom have already fallen victim to bombings. “History has taught us not to side with the aggressor,” they wrote in a statement distributed at the demonstration. “We urgently demand safe routes and corridors for our medical teams to reach Gaza and provide the necessary treatment and care for the injured of our people.”

Over 2,000 people also gathered in Frankfurt. This was preceded by an attempt by the city government and the Hesse state Interior Ministry to ban the demonstration. The organisers took legal action against this and their right to protest was upheld in two courts.

Nevertheless, the demonstration was only allowed to take place under strict conditions. Among other things, the organisers had to provide more than 60 stewards, and Israel’s right to exist could not be questioned. In addition, a large police force surrounded the demonstration and repeatedly pulled out individual participants holding critical signs.

All speakers at the rally explicitly condemned antisemitism and any form of discrimination and violence against individual population groups.

WSWS reporters spoke to multiple demonstrators.

Aliya condemned the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza and the demonisation of any criticism of this: “An entire people is being massacred right now; children are being killed. And if we raise our voices, it is immediately considered antisemitism or anti-Israel. Although in Germany they always brag that ‘We have freedom of speech here.’”

But freedom of expression only applied if you speak out in favour of Ukraine or Israel, Aliya said. “But as soon as we say, ‘Stop the war in Palestine,’ they say,

‘No, you are antisemitic.’ So unfortunately, we don’t have freedom of expression,” she said.

She supported the perspective of an international workers’ struggle: “I think that’s great. So that means both Israelis and Palestinians who want peace then get together and fight against injustice. That would be optimal for me.”

Aliya concluded, “So if the Israeli people and the Palestinian people say, ‘We can live together in harmony’ and right now the two governments are causing the war, then I would say, ‘Raise your voice, fight against your governments and really try to live together peacefully.’ I think that would be the optimal solution.”

She went on to condemn the policies of the imperialist powers and other Arab countries that continue to fuel the conflict. “If they stopped being supplied with weapons, or even money, I don’t think the war would last that long.”

She said she welcomed a united struggle by workers here in Germany and thought this was realistic, “Because there are already a lot of us—regardless of whether we are Germans with a migration background or ‘just Germans.’ If we were to stick together ourselves, I believe that a huge movement would emerge.”

“This government has really made a fatal mistake,” she added. “Foreign Minister Baerbock has declared war on Putin [in the Council of Europe] and unilaterally supports Israel. She does not stand for peace but has assured unconditional support for Israel.”

Aliya thought that “Germany, or rather the government, is in a war mood right now. And I think that’s fatal because most German citizens—that’s Germans with an immigrant background as well as others—don’t want war. They actually just want to live in peace and that should be respected. In my opinion, this current government is not speaking on behalf of the people.”

Speaking at the demonstration, **Mohamed** warned that the war in Gaza could escalate into a war in the whole region, “And that’s exactly why we want this to be stopped as early as possible. It’s mainly people who haven’t done anything, who are just people on both sides—children and elderly people—who are being sacrificed in the war.”

He agreed that the escalation of the war on Gaza

could only be stopped through the unity of the international working class: articles from the WSWS “should be spread as widely as possible and come to as many people as possible, because this really creates freedom, justice and also in the end as few murders as possible.”

Mark and **Vanessa** had travelled to Frankfurt from Duisburg for the international book fair and then joined the rally there. The calls for “unreserved solidarity with Israel also harm the Palestinians here in Germany above all, and also of course in the Middle East,” Mark said.

“If you declare solidarity with Israel at this time, it means you are on the side of child murderers and a right-wing government,” Vanessa added. “We can stand in solidarity with Jewish people, but not necessarily with a state that spreads this kind of terror.”

Mark also saw the government’s Middle East policy as reflecting Germany’s broader imperialist aspirations. Referencing the call by Social Democratic Chancellor Olaf Scholz for a “new era” in foreign policy, Mark said, “Germany would like to have a bigger place in the sun, militarily, in NATO and in the world.” He was against this. “I don’t want us to spend hundreds of billions on weapons all over the world. People here and all over the world lack everything and yet we keep spending money on weapons.”

He concluded that there were interests behind this, “not least, definitely Western interests. The US, for example, is in the process of losing the dominance it currently has. The zenith of American hegemony has passed.”

He also condemned the increasing restriction of democratic rights: “You can see that a lot of demonstrations have been banned in the last two weeks. Pro-Palestine demonstrations, of course, but also many other demonstrations, anti-racism demonstrations. And that is a dangerous development for democracy in Germany. Of course, this must not be allowed to happen.”



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