

Huge protests throughout the Asia-Pacific against the Gaza genocide

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This weekend, many hundreds of thousands of people across the Asia-Pacific region took part in the global demonstrations opposing Israel's genocidal war in Gaza and denouncing the imperialist powers for supporting the slaughter. Workers and young people expressed not only their revulsion to what is taking place in Gaza, but their anti-war sentiment in general.

All these protests have faced a near-total blackout in the corporate and government media, which has also attempted to hide from the public the atrocities being committed by Israel. However, as they learn what is happening to the Palestinian people, more and more people are coming out to demand action against the slaughter in Gaza.

In Indonesia, one of the most populous countries in the region, thousands of people have taken part in protests since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising on October 7 and Israel's brutal response. The largest protest to date took place Sunday in Jakarta. Hundreds of thousands gathered near the United States embassy, located by National Monument Square. Participants waved Palestinian flags and called for a ceasefire and a free Palestine.

Participants reported on social media that as many as two million people took part. Protests also took place in other cities around the country.

Demonstrators condemned the barbarism taking place. "I wanted to take part in this march so that I can show to the public that here in Indonesia we have a huge number of people who care about Palestine," 22-year-old Syifa told *Arab News*. "I think it's important, while you are able, to give out your voice for humanity. Especially because this Palestine issue is clearly not a conflict, it's genocide."

In neighboring Malaysia, tens of thousands protested. On Sunday, for example, video footage on social media of a packed soccer stadium in Terengganu showed fans

waving Palestinian flags and chanting in support of Palestinians.

Large numbers of people have been taking part in protests around Malaysia. The previous week on October 28, tens of thousands held a rally and march to the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Tens of thousands demonstrated on October 22.

At the latter demonstration, Hussein, a 35-year-old Palestinian stated: "There's a lot of awareness that's increasing towards the support of the Palestinian cause, and to finally give a fair share of attention to what the Palestinians have been pleading for since 1948, which is fair standards of living and equality."

Significantly, protests are growing in Japan, where widespread anti-war sentiment exists within the working class. Even as Tokyo is pushing to remilitarize and prepare for a US-instigated war against China, the demonstrations taking place show that the Japanese public does not buy the imperialist propaganda used as justification for such conflicts.

In one of the largest rallies to date, thousands marched on Sunday in Tokyo near the Israeli embassy, calling for an end to Israeli war crimes. They shouted slogans such as "Free Palestine" and "No genocide."

Another protest in Tokyo on November 1 involved 300 people near Israel's embassy. A 60-year-old woman at that protest told Japan's national broadcaster NHK that there had been little coverage of what was going on in Gaza, but she felt compelled to demonstrate after learning more about it. Others felt similarly and called for more protests.

Additional rallies have taken place in other major Japanese cities. Demonstrating outside the US consulate in Osaka on October 16, Yoshiyasu Yamakawa, one of the protest organizers declared: "There's no chance of resolution through military escalation. I want the US to immediately stop aiding Israel, work toward an

unconditional military withdrawal and the start of peace negotiations.”

On October 22, about 300 people protested in the city of Fukuoka. That rally was organized by Osama Eljamal, originally from the Gaza Strip and a professor at Kyushu University. Other Palestinians residing in Japan took part in the rally. They declared solidarity with the Palestinian people while calling for a ceasefire and end to war.

Similarly, hundreds of people have demonstrated in Seoul, South Korea. On Saturday, protesters gathered at Cheonggyecheon, near the Israeli and US embassies. Rally participants called for a ceasefire while denouncing the genocide in Gaza. Those taking part included Koreans and foreign residents.

Other protests have been held in Seoul and in cities like Busan. This includes rallies on a weekly basis since Israel’s attack on Gaza began. In some cases, police have intervened to try to silence protests, claiming the rallies exceeded legal noise limits.

In the Philippines, there have been protests in Manila as well as in the southern part of the country where there is a sizeable Muslim population. Hundreds gathered at protests in the capital city on November 4, holding Palestinian flags and calling for an end to hostilities.

Other protests have taken place in recent days, particularly to denounce Manila’s decision to abstain from a United Nations vote on October 27 calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Protesters have held up signs reading “Stand with Palestine” while denouncing the role of US imperialism in supporting Israel’s genocide. At times, police have clashed with protesters.

Bangkok, Thailand has also seen protests in recent weeks. One of the largest demonstrations reported on took place October 21, when hundreds rallied near the Israeli embassy. Demonstrators held signs with slogans such as “Bombing kids is not self-defense.”

The protests occurring throughout the Asia-Pacific region are just the tip of the iceberg, mostly hidden from view by the official media. Millions more are drawing the conclusion that the assault on Palestinians in Gaza is an attack on the rights of all working people.



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