

Protests continue for eighth weekend across Canada against Israel's genocide in Gaza

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Thousands turned out at protests in Toronto and across the country over the weekend to denounce the resumption of Israel's genocidal onslaught against the Palestinians in Gaza and demand an immediate ceasefire.

As many as 20,000 Gazans have been killed in two months of unrelenting bombing and a ground invasion of the narrow coastal enclave by the Israel Defense Forces backed by the United States, Canada and the European imperialist powers. Israel's assault has targeted refugee camps, residential buildings, schools and hospitals in pursuit of the "final solution" to the Palestinian question, i.e., clearing the population from Gaza and forcing them into exile.

Millions around the world, horrified by the unfolding carnage, have turned out in the largest wave of anti-war protests since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. This has included more than 50,000 who rallied outside the parliament building in Ottawa on October 25 to demand the Liberal Trudeau government support a ceasefire.

The political establishment and mainstream media, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, have repeatedly rejected calls for a ceasefire as "pro-Hamas," and slandered those who oppose this genocide as "antisemitic." In the face of this rabid witch-hunt, workers and young people have continued to protest.

On Saturday, approximately 2,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators gathered at Nathan Phillips Square in downtown Toronto outside city hall, where they chanted slogans, including "Palestine will be free" and "Free the people, free the land, no peace on stolen land," before marching down Bay Street and blocking an intersection for an hour. Organizers from Toronto4Palestine encouraged attendees to sign a petition appealing to the Trudeau government to

abandon its support for the Israeli government.

Cassidy, who was attending her first protests since the Israeli Defence Forces onslaught began in early October, told the *World Socialist Web Site*, "I'm here to protest against Israel for the terrible things they are doing to the Palestinian people, they are murdering them, they are bombing Gaza, they are destroying homes, they are literally leaving them to starve, this is unacceptable! Netanyahu needs to go to jail. What he is doing is absolutely deplorable.

"All this is really is a genocide and the United States is helping fund it, they are sending weapons and soldiers. Genocide Joe is lying for Netanyahu and both of them need to go to jail! Israel is a puppet to America and everyone needs to wake up to that."

She was particularly incensed by the claim that those who oppose the genocide are antisemitic, responding, "Any person that is defending Palestine, this is not antisemitism. It is defending people who are a victim of genocide. And I'm upset at the fact that people are being arrested for saying 'From the River to the Sea.' This is not ok, where is the free speech? We are losing our right to free speech."

Responding to the Palestinian trade unions' call for workers to block the shipment of war materiel to Israel, Cassidy explained, "I am all for the working class joining together and standing up for the rights of Palestinians. We have the right to say 'No, we do not want to build this, we do not want to do this.' Let's go on strike, let's stand up for the innocent. We are not going to fund any weapons, we are not going to give them weapons, we are not going to build bombs. Everybody has the right to say 'No' in a position like this. And I genuinely agree with workers going on strike."

Hundreds also rallied Saturday on the steps of the

Vancouver Art Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia to call for a ceasefire, for the eighth weekend in a row, before marching through downtown. Other protests included a #bike4palestine bike rally and a protest outside an Indigo bookstore. Eleven people, including three suspended York University employees, face criminal charges for a protest last month in Toronto against the CEO of Indigo Books and Music Heather Reisman over her financial support for the IDF.

On Sunday an estimated 400 people turned out for a pro-Palestinian protest outside city hall in Calgary, Alberta. The peaceful protesters, who chanted “Palestine will be free” and “Ceasefire now,” were confronted by Zionist counter-protesters who provocatively and grotesquely depicted a rape by an individual dressed as a Hamas fighter.

In Montreal, Quebec, about a dozen demonstrators were arrested on Friday morning after blocking Canadian National railroad tracks in solidarity with Gaza and to demand the Trudeau government end its support for Israel. A statement posted online by the group explained their action was part of a “growing movement across the country to block railway tracks in order to interrupt Canadian support for the genocide being committed by Israel in Gaza and the increasing violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.”

“Israel could not commit all these crimes without the material and political support of the West, including our Canadian government. This is ethnic cleansing. This is genocide. There must be a permanent ceasefire now,” activist and protest participant Sarah Aly stated.

The decision to cancel the screening of a documentary critical of Israel in the face of complaints by Zionist groups was reversed this week amid protests. The Westdale cinema in Hamilton, Ontario announced Friday that the screening of the documentary *Israelism* would go forward this week as initially planned. “After careful review, we determined that there was no credible evidence that the screening would cause harm to anyone in our community,” a statement from the theater’s board of directors explained. “We also acknowledge that the screening of this film was important to many in our community.”

The film, made by Jewish filmmakers, follows two young American Jews who were raised with an idealistic view of Israel but come face to face with the brutal reality of the repression of the Palestinians. The

screening was organized by Rabbi David Mivasair, a member of Independent Jewish Voices, a group which is critical of Israel.

Meanwhile a national rally in support of Israel in Ottawa on Monday drew just a few thousand people, despite receiving considerable media hype. It was addressed by leading members of Parliament, including Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre’s deputy Melissa Lantsman and Liberal MP Anthony Housefather.



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