

France: Protesters denounce the escalation of Gazan genocide

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On Saturday, thousands protested in Paris to oppose the Israeli government's genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people. According to the police, 7,000 joined the march in the French capital. Hundreds marched in Nantes, Strasbourg, Lyon, Marseille and Toulouse. There were also marches in dozens of other major French cities and towns.

Protesters took to the streets one day after the "humanitarian pauses" between Hamas and Israel ended and the Zionist state began what was its heaviest day of bombing since the beginning of the onslaught after the uprising of October 7. By the end of the weekend the official death toll amongst Gazans exceeded 15,000.

At the Paris protest, the WSWs spoke with Hizia, a law student who explained that ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip "has been the goal for decades. It did not start on October 7. It's just an excuse to be able to bomb. Sure, there's a truce, but there have been more imprisonments, more children who have been captured [by the Israelis] than the number released. The talk about a truce is just media hype, once again."

On the French government's repression of pro-Palestine protests, including arresting leaders of a Jewish anti-Zionist group in Strasbourg, Hizia said, "I study law and my father used to tell me, 'My daughter, democracy does not exist.' And when I was younger, I would have arguments with my father and I would respond, 'Stop saying that, democracy exists.' I believed that we lived in a country of human rights. But now it's not the case."

She added, "When we think about the Nuremberg Tribunal and the way people were punished, we see that our leaders now are committing exactly the same thing."

The WSWs also spoke to Imene, a student, who said,

"We shouldn't describe what we see as a pause. It's not normal to take a break to then come back and massacre them. It's inhumane, plain and simple. It shouldn't happen like that and it's appalling that the heads of state close their eyes and let all this happen."

"The question is, is their justification of 'we kill civilians to kill Hamas,' correct? No, not at all, because it has been proven that Hamas does not use civilians as human shields. And even when the Israeli government is asked to prove it, they are not able to prove it. Then when the bodies are recovered it's mostly children and women."

"The heads of the [Israeli] government, they said it themselves several times that their goal was not only to kill Hamas, but to raze the population of Gaza."

She added on Macron and his government, "They support genocide and history will not forget it. They are on the wrong side. They claim to speak in the name of the French but they don't speak for me. I am not part of it and all of us who are here today, we are against Macron, we are against whoever comes in and supports a genocide that is not normal."

Rachid, a French-Algerian worker, also spoke to the WSWs, criticizing the campaign to whitewash and legitimise Israel's response in the bourgeois press. He said, "That's the problem with the media. They put the starting point on October 7. It's not true. It's been 75 years, 80 years, since it started. You can't put someone in a cage and wonder why they're going to revolt. [The Palestinians] are an occupied people. Any people deprived of their land has the right to retaliate, to resist by all means, including armed, military means. If Hamas did this, then it's a resistance movement. In no case is it correct to describe it as a terrorist event. It's just misinformation."

He also denounced the pseudo-left parties and unions

who endorsed and propagated Israeli propaganda surrounding the events of October 7. Rachid explained, “There is a large pressure in France and now they [those who denounced the October 7 rising] are embarrassed. At the beginning, it was presented as a terrorist attack, the claim they were killing children was used to say they were terrorists. But I think they didn’t killed children, they didn’t rape a woman. These are just accusations, there is no proof. It’s allegations, really. I think it’s lying, pure lying.”

Commenting on the protest movement throughout France and Europe, which has seen millions of people of all backgrounds march against the genocide since October 7, Rachid added, “Humanity has awakened. The human consciousness of freer populations has awakened to the fact that what is happening in Palestine is unjust.”

Rachid also drew an historical parallel between the current presentation of the war and the designation of the Algerian anti-colonial resistance as terrorists in the 1950s. He explained, “I am of Algerian origin, my father is Algerian. When the Algerians revolted against France in ’54, the FLN, the National Liberation Front, it was initially treated as a terrorist movement. And the resistance fighters of that time were treated as terrorists. But really when a people are oppressed for a century and a half, it’s normal that they would revolt with arms.”



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