

Las Vegas demonstrators honor Dr. Refaat al-Ar'eer at rally against Israeli genocide

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11 December 2023

Some 200 people rallied and marched Sunday in Las Vegas, Nevada to protest Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and honor Dr. Refaat al-Ar'eer, who was assassinated in a targeted airstrike that destroyed his sister's home last week. Prof. al-Ar'eer is one of dozens of teachers, intellectuals and academics, who have been purposely assassinated by the US-backed Israel Defense Forces.

Dr. al-Ar'eer was a teacher, writer, and an activist. Through his Twitter/X page, "Refaat in Gaza" he regularly posted updates on the occupation and ongoing genocide, and it was for that reason he was targeted. As of December 11 at least 56 Palestinian journalists have been killed in Gaza since the slaughter began on October 7.

At Sunday's protest, his final poem, "If I must die", was read aloud and incorporated it into a chant, "No, we will not fail, we will go and tell your tale." A moment of silence in honor of Dr. al-Ar'eer was also held before demonstrators marched through Downtown Las Vegas.

At the end of the march police took a 12-year-old and his mother into custody for allegedly attempting to break into parked vehicles. Police on the scene said the youth was checking the door handles of cars as he walked by. However, as the demonstrators who gathered outside the courthouse pointed out, there were no cars or place for them to park along the march route, which led from the George D. Lloyd Courthouse along Las Vegas Blvd. to the Fremont Street Experience and back.

For fifteen minutes protesters surrounded the steps of the courthouse and chanted "release them now," until rally organizers reported police had in fact released the child and his mother.

This reporter distributed 75 copies of the Perspective

on the assassination of Dr. Refaat al-Ar'eer and talked with several workers and youth.

Savannah came to the demonstration for the first time with her children, saying she came out, "To stand with Palestine. I've been watching on TikTok all the horrible things happening with the mothers and the kids. It's their home and I would want someone to fight for me, and I wanted to end it, and it's crazy that the [US government] are not calling for a ceasefire!"

She disagreed vehemently with the charge of antisemitism against protesters, stating, "No, we're here because we care. It's out of our hearts. It's about kids, it's about the families, it's about the hurt, about right and wrong, about we shouldn't be doing this. It shouldn't be continuing to happen.

"It's sickening. I don't like it. I don't have like the big words, I just come from my heart and it just it hurts."

Jayden, a local high school student, attended the rally with his mother for his second time. When asked about the assassination of Dr. al-Ar'eer he said, "My mom just informed me today when I came out here because I didn't know who he was, but she informed me what he did. And it's not fair that someone who is just innocent, trying to educate the people on what he knows gets assassinated just like that, like he was nothing."

Regarding the bogus antisemitism slanders leveled against demonstrators, Jayden said, "I think it's unfair. Everyone has a right to believe what they want to support. I mean, you can basically support whatever you want, just as long as it's peaceful, in my opinion."

Amaya said that she was attending her third rally in Las Vegas since moving out from California over Thanksgiving weekend. Before that, she had attended several demonstrations in northern California. When asked what she thought about the assassination of Dr. al-

Ar'eer, she said, "I think it's unfortunate. You know he's just like everyone else, just regular people. It's like not only is he a cousin, a son, an uncle, and things like that, he did a lot for the people in Gaza and Palestine to really educate them, help them learn English.

"[T]here's power in language and with language comes understanding... if it wasn't for him, we wouldn't understand a good, maybe a good part of this. And he's helped a lot of people in Palestine to help them learn English so the Palestinians can also get that word out to us."

Asked to comment on the Democrats and Republican's support for genocide, and the response of the media, she said, "It's all part of their, their ugly ass propaganda. This government is very, very corrupt. I mean, I used to, I used to identify as Democrat and I actually voted for Joe Biden, but I very much regret it now. And it's like, you can't trust the government. I can't, at least I can't trust the government at all. I don't even want to pay taxes anymore. I'm not going to."

Amaya also rejected claims that the anti-genocide protests were antisemitic, saying, "It is false. It is, once again, a part of their propaganda. I think it's very disgusting how our world leaders and the UN well, I mean just the United States, it's just disgusting how they're still standing by Israel's side and we're supposed to be a democracy. This United States of America is supposedly known as a democracy, but you know, after all of this, it does not seem like a democracy when people all over the states are protesting for Palestine and we're not getting our voices heard."

Asked her thoughts on the Palestinian trade unions call for workers around the world to stop the delivery of military materiel and munitions to Israel, she said, "I think that should happen immediately."



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