

Rappers Macklemore and Residente denounce genocide in Gaza

David Walsh
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Before an audience of 18,000 people in his hometown of Seattle, Washington, American rapper, singer and songwriter Macklemore proclaimed his support for a “Free Palestine” to the cheers of the youthful crowd.

The singer (born Benjamin Haggerty in 1983) took the occasion of the conclusion of a world tour to deliver a four-minute poem on the subject of the Israeli war on Gaza.

“When I say Free Palestine,” the singer explained, “it’s not against anyone. It actually means we should protect everyone. It means equality for all, respect, peace and love. It means a right to exist, regardless of what sector you’re from.”

Macklemore decried the fact that there are “innocent humans out in Gaza getting murdered with our dollars, and those precious human lives are an extension of us. I can’t get up here in a fur coat, jump around, and pretend, while in my gut ... my gut is saying, you know, you’d better step up for us.”

The rapper expressed his love for his “Jewish brothers and sister,” insisting that his perspective of “Free Palestine is also rooted in your protection... There isn’t a drop of antisemitic thought in my head or my blood. Never again means never again for all. Have we not learned the lessons?”

Macklemore observed that “the word genocide is such a point of contention for some,” such people find the word “more hurtful than seeing dead babies getting pulled out of the crumbled cement and the dust.”

He concluded his remarks read from a piece of paper: “In this moment in time we’re being called to rise and become, see ourselves in the pain of others and not separate from them. And I must say till I die with my chest to the sky, Free Palestine, the message is love.”

On November 4, Macklemore addressed the huge rally in Washington D.C. protesting the Israeli mass

murder. At that event, he remarked that there were “thousands of people here that are more qualified to speak on the issue of a free Palestine than myself.” Referring to attempts to silence him, the rapper continued, “They told me to be quiet. They told me to do my research, to go back, that it’s too complex to say something, right? To be silent in this moment. In the last three weeks, I’ve gone back and I’ve done some research. And I am teachable. I don’t know enough. But I know enough that this is a genocide.”

In an initial statement, in October, Macklemore called for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid to be allowed entry into Gaza. He asserted that there was a “fear of immediately being labeled antisemitic when you say anything against the Israeli government. This is false. I can wholeheartedly love my Jewish brothers and sisters while simultaneously condemning the Israeli government for their mass killings and apartheid.”

Puerto Rican rapper, singer, songwriter and filmmaker Residente announced on social media recently that he had chosen to delay the release of his new album, due to the mass murder occurring in the Gaza Strip.

On Instagram, Residente explained in Spanish that he was telling “everyone interested in my music” that he had “decided to postpone the release of my album along with several videos that were supposed to be released this year, because it is impossible for me to do so in the face of all the macabre genocide” that “slowly destroys Palestine.”

The singer (born René Pérez Joglar in 1978 in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico) is the winner of more than 30 Grammy awards, more than any other Latin artist. In his Instagram video, he asked rhetorically, “when was the day when we dehumanized ourselves to such a level that we can see the heads of boys and girls exploding in

front of us and we don't say anything? Why doesn't everything stop, like in the pandemic?" We should "stop everything and focus on what is happening in Gaza," Residente argued.

He criticized those who were busy "uploading a 'story' modeling clothes or showing the plate of food you are eating or the night of parties where you got drunk." Instead, the singer suggested, "stop for a moment, look for information about Palestine and denounce the genocide that Israel is committing with the support of the United States against the civilian population of Palestine, because they are civilians who are being killed."

The Puerto Rican performing artist added that "You don't have to be a historian to put yourself in the shoes of every person massacred in Palestine. It is simple. This is about having empathy, about putting yourself in the place of others, about thinking about others, about thinking that that child who was just killed could be your son or your brother or that that woman under the rubble could be your mother."

More recently, also on Instagram, Residente denounced President Joe Biden: "You will always be remembered as the president that supported the genocide in Gaza. You're a war criminal!"



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