

Protesters speak out at UK demonstrations against Gaza genocide

Our reporters
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WSWS reporting teams spoke to some of the protesters at Saturday's national demonstration in London, and other UK cities against Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Members of the Socialist Equality Party and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) distributed thousands of copies of the statement, "As it supports Gaza genocide, UK government wages war on democratic rights", advertising a series of public meetings on the subject. The next meetings will be held in Sheffield and Inverness. Visit [here](#) to register for the meetings.

London

Reporters spoke with **Gopi**, a teacher, and her daughter **Kabita**, a digital worker.

Kabita explained, "I'm appalled that our government is funding so much atrocity across the world and that my taxes are going to bombing innocent civilians. I struggle to sleep at night, so I feel like I have to come here and show solidarity."

Gopi agreed, "Israel's aim is to steal all the land. They want all of Palestine for themselves. I was reading that some Jews in Israel are saying 'From the river to sea, freedom and equality,' and that's what we have to aim for, for Jews and Palestinians: equality in Palestine. The alternative is violence, apartheid, racism. That's what they have shown us the last 75 years."

Kabita added, "Accusations of antisemitism are covering up the truth which is imperialism and genocide. It's such an easy way to hide crimes."

Asked about the Labour Party's backing of the war, Gopi said, "Unless they change their policy of playing into this terribly wrong and unjust narrative that Israel can do whatever they like because of a historic crime, I cannot vote for Labour anymore."

Speaking about the complicity of Egypt and the Arab regimes in backing Israel, she explained, "They will happily sacrifice Palestinians for their own political

agendas."

Lore, a journalist from Canada, explained, "I was in Gaza in 2016 and everything that I visited that was there is gone now, so many of the people are dead. I'm a journalist; I went to train journalists. And now this is the deadliest war in history for journalists. Anyone who can cut through the lies from the media can see that it's ethnic cleansing and it has been for 75 years.

"I'm from Canada, and the big lie this week was that one of the Palestine protests targeted a Jewish hospital, because it went past Mount Sinai Hospital on one of the roads protests always go down in Toronto. That lie was repeated not just by the media but by the prime minister and his cabinet.

"The lies are egregious, but people are finding other sources. The media and the politicians are really invested in colonialism and continuing things as they have been, but there is more awareness in the public.

"I hope people take the protest from the streets to other venues. Because there is a lot that can be done. You can blockade the railways. You can blockade the ports."

Teacher **Sayed** and **Afifa** responded to Education Secretary Gillian Keegan complaining that children should not participate in protests over Gaza.

"Why wouldn't they, why shouldn't they, why couldn't they?" asked Sayed.

Afifa added, "Children are watching other children being massacred and killed and bombed. It's affecting them, their mental health... We're watching this day in day out.

"You've got to listen to the people. We vote for the government, but if they're going to make their own policies and decide this is the way the UK is going to react to genocide and mass murder then we must come onto the streets and say this is what we feel."

The Labour Party, Afifa said, have been "a total letdown."

“They are a cog in the machine,” agreed Sayed, “We’re from a Labour background, but after people like Tony Blair and Starmer, and increasingly on every issue, you can’t vote for them.”

Hasnat said, “Until last year I believed in the two-state solution, and I no longer believe in it. We have to understand how the Israeli national state was created; it was an imperialist sin. It was created illegally on someone else’s land given to another group to cover up the imperialist powers’ own crimes. Israel is not a democracy. A state running an apartheid system cannot be a democratic system.

“Democracy is not just voting and attending government. Keir Starmer will probably become prime minister, not because he’s popular, but because people want to remove Sunak. He is possibly more right-wing and pro-Zionist than even Sunak. They’re both criminals. All of the Arab regimes are complicit, too. That’s why ordinary people are rising up.”

Manchester

Engineer **Mohammed** attended the more than 1,000 strong protest and march through Manchester from Piccadilly Gardens to St Peters Square.

Mohammed said, “From what I’ve gathered from the news, 1.5 million people are on the border in Rafah. It’s looks like Israel are really going to push forward and attack. It’s heartbreaking, especially when I’ve got children of my own. 10,000 children have been brutally slaughtered.

“If it can happen there, it can happen here or anywhere. You cannot justify that at all. What happened in Israel in October is bad, but there are other ways of sorting things out, through dialogue.

“I will never ever, in my lifetime, regardless of what happens, vote for Labour, or Conservative, any of the big parties. I’m just waiting for the day that the canvassers come knocking on my door. I like Corbyn, but he was a bit of a letdown.”

Condemning the persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, whose extradition to the US is likely imminent, Mohammed commented: “There’s no freedom of speech. It only exists if you follow the narrative of your government... but as soon as you step out line they’re on top of you.”

Asked his opinion on the trade unions ignoring the appeal of Palestinian unions to stop the manufacture and transport of weapons to Israel, Mohammed said, “Even at my work, they can’t even get a 1 percent pay rise, and we’re talking about global resistance.”

Radia English “I think it’s

what is happening in Rafah. It’s clearly genocide and not a war. How can you support kids being murdered, babies being murdered, innocent civilians. It’s appalling. It’s not about being antisemitic, it’s about anti-Zionism, they are two different things.”

Sheffield

In Sheffield, 200 workers and youth marched through the city centre. Many brought home-made placards. One read, “You cannot build a land for your children on the mass graves of other children.”

Nick, a National Health Service worker, said, “What is happening in Rafah is the next step of the genocide. This is what Israel has been doing or trying to do for decades since before most of the people that have come to these protests were even born.

“The Israeli government is in its own little bubble where they don’t accept what people around the world say. It will take a lot more than court rulings like that of the International Court of Justice to stop them.

“The UK is guilty in establishing the occupation. As long as the US and UK are profiting from the occupation, especially when we are ruled by a small elite who are profiting so massively, I don’t think they will stop it.

“You don’t see it in wider news, but you come to protests like this and you see hundreds of thousands. This is happening all around the world. What Israel is doing is wrong and Palestine needs to be defended. The US and UK and other countries are complicit, and they must be stood up to.

“It’s really disappointing that the unions are not more active. They are meant to be the voice of the people. I used to be a Labour voter through the Corbyn years, I was brought up as a Labour, or at least a left-wing voter. I can’t support Keir Starmer or Labour as they are currently. They are just Tories in red ties. I am not surprised about Starmer’s full backing for Israel given the witch-hunt against Corbyn and his allies.”



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