

Sri Lanka: Hands off US university students! Mobilise the working class in defense of all those protesting against genocide!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Sri Lanka)
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka denounces President Biden's administration's ongoing police repression of students protesting the Israeli genocide in Gaza. Hundreds of students have been arrested by police at Columbia, Southern California, Yale, New York City, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina, other California universities, college campuses and many other places.

We call on all students at Sri Lankan universities and higher education institutions, and the working class, to join us in defending these students and to oppose the Netanyahu government's genocidal military operation in Gaza.

US students are courageously defying the police repression and the orders of the Biden administration and university authorities for a halt to the protests. The determined action of American students is part of the global movement of youth and workers against Israel's murderous attacks on the Palestinians.

The police crackdown in the US is akin to a series of military operations. Prior to their arrests, students were photographed and videotaped, with armed police snipers placed on building rooftops in some campuses, their weapons trained on the peaceful protesters.

The police brutality was instigated by the Biden administration with the support of the Democratic Party and former US President Trump's fascist Republican Party. With the backing of the media, they falsely claim that student protests are antisemitic, that is, they oppose Jews. This is a blatant lie. In fact, Jewish students are participating in the protest student campaigns in large numbers.

The real antisemites are the imperialist governments.

In 1930s, the US government turned a blind eye to the Hitler's annihilation of the Jews, while preventing thousands of Jewish refugees from entering America. Today the Israeli government is carrying out the same sort of ethnic-cleansing operations against Palestinians that the Nazis carried out against Jews.

The Biden administration's attack on US students is a major step in its ongoing assault on democratic rights, including freedom of speech. US imperialism is the primary backer of the Netanyahu government's extermination campaign, with Biden last Thursday approving another \$26 billion in arms for Israel to continue its genocidal attacks.

The brutal invasion of Gaza, which began in October last year, has subjected the Palestinian people to a horrendous military onslaught. In just over six months, 1.9 million of the 2.2 million people living in Gaza have been displaced, over 34,000 killed, and 80,000 injured. Israel has deprived the entire population of Gaza of access to vital supplies of food, water, and medical and sanitation facilities. Major hospitals have been razed to the ground, killing patients and medical staff alike.

These imperialist-backed war crimes have sparked opposition from workers and youth internationally. Protests by workers and youth are continuing throughout Europe, including the UK, Italy, Germany and France, and throughout the world, including Australia.

From the outset, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe aligned himself with Israel's invasion of Gaza, condemning the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7 as a "mass killing of civilians" while ignoring the plight of the Palestinians. Sri Lankan

opposition parties, including the Samagi Jana Balawegaya and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna's National People's Power, remain silent, implicitly backing Israel's daily mass murder of the Palestinians.

Last Friday, the *Morning*, a Sri Lankan web-based newspaper, published an article titled "US lawmakers take strong stand against antisemitic attacks on US campuses" that simply repeated the lies of Biden government. These and other Sri Lankan media outlets are attempting to poison the consciousness of the masses with this misinformation.

Sri Lankan workers and students have been involved in ongoing protests against the Wickremesinghe government's International Monetary Fund austerity measures. This brutal program includes the privatisation or commercialisation of state-owned enterprises and the destruction of tens of thousands of jobs, deep cuts to education and health spending, and higher taxes on food and other essentials, including increased tariffs for water and electricity. With more than 25 percent of the population now living in extreme poverty, Sri Lankan workers and the poor are fighting to defend their social conditions.

The Wickremesinghe government has responded to the popular opposition to these measures by unleashing armed police against workers and students and imposing repressive laws, such as the Essential Public Services Act, to ban strikes.

We call on workers, intellectuals, students and youth in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally to oppose the Israel war on the Palestinian masses, issue statements supporting the protesting students in the US and internationally, and to organise their own demonstrations.

The IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka, along with their sister organisations globally, are urging young people to turn to the international working class, the only social force able to fight the reactionary attacks of the Biden administration and its international backers, including the Wickremesinghe regime.

As the International Committee of the Fourth International and its organ, the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) have warned, the US and its imperialist allies, fully endorse the Israeli assault on Gaza. The genocide in Gaza is part of Washington's escalating provocations against Iran, the US-led NATO war

against Russia in Ukraine, and the preparations for war against China, threatening all of humanity with a catastrophic Third World War.

As David North, national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (US) and chairman of the International Editorial Board of the WSWS, declares in his call for workers, students and youth to participate in our forthcoming international May Day meeting:

"An unmistakable sign of the preparations for a world war is the violent reaction of the federal, state and local governments to the anti-genocide protests by students, using the lying claim of campus 'antisemitism.' It is only the first stage of massive government repression directed against all domestic anti-war opposition. War overseas means war at home.

"The immense danger of a catastrophic escalation to a world war, which would inevitably lead to the use of nuclear weapons, requires a serious and far-sighted political strategy."

Our online international May Day meeting on May 4, will explain and discuss this socialist and internationalist strategy. We urge students, youth and workers to register for this historic event.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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