

Grammy award-winning hip hop artist Macklemore denounces Gaza genocide in viral hit “Hind’s Hall”

Nick Barrickman
8 May 2024

On Monday, hip hop entertainer Macklemore (Benjamin Hammond Haggerty, born June 19, 1983, in Seattle, Washington) posted “Hind’s Hall” on social media. “Hind’s Hall” is the most pronounced expression of opposition to the US sponsored Israeli onslaught against the trapped and helpless Palestinians in Gaza by a prominent artist or musician.

Macklemore has bravely taken up defense of the protests against the genocide despite the nearly wall-to-wall denunciation of the protesters by the media and the political establishment as “antisemitic.” This has been accompanied by a massive police-state crackdown on student protests. In the face of this repression, Macklemore’s song has gone “viral,” with nearly 100 million views on Macklemore’s Instagram and over 27 million on Twitter/X as of Wednesday afternoon.

The mass response led YouTube to immediately censor “Hind’s Hall,” placing an age restriction on viewers trying to access it through its website, which has substantially limited its viewership on the platform to under half a million.

The song is named after Columbia University’s Hamilton Hall, which was occupied by student anti-genocide demonstrators. The students renamed the hall after six-year-old Hind Rajab, a Palestinian child murdered by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the assault on Gaza.

“Block the barricade until Palestine is free” he repeats several times early on in the song, adding that “peace isn’t the problem, it’s what they’re protesting/ it goes against what our government is funding.”

The rapper doesn’t flinch from confronting one of the key elements of propaganda used to intimidate the protesters, rebutting the claim that these mass

demonstrations are “antisemitic.”

“I seen Jewish brothers and sisters out there ridin’/ in solidarity and screaming ‘free Palestine,’” he states. He notes the Jewish protesters have been:

Organizin’, unlearnin’ and finally cuttin’ ties
with/
A state that’s gotta rely on an apartheid system/
to uphold an occupyin’ violent/
History been repeating for the last seventy-five/
The Nakba never ended, the colonizer lied/

There are other powerful moments in the video, which is composed of a montage of different video clippings from protests, scenes of devastation in Gaza and other footage. In a significant lyric, Macklemore denounces President Joe Biden directly, declaring he has “blood on his hands” and “f— no, I’m not voting for you in the fall.”

In this, Macklemore is pointing out what is already clear to millions and routinely denied by the capitalist media as well as the pseudo-left and other apologists of the administration: the genocide is being directly armed and enabled by the United States, and the Biden White House in particular.

Macklemore has in the past prominently supported the Democratic Party, serving as a spokesperson for the Obama administration’s policy on drug addiction as well as publicly celebrating the electoral loss of Republican Donald Trump to Biden in 2020.

The primary political weakness of “Hind’s Hall,” and the protests more generally, is the failure to connect

the Palestinian people's suffering to its underlying cause in the capitalist system and imperialism.

Macklemore refers to "white supremacy" more than once. At one point he states, "the right of resistance has always been about dollars and the color of your (skin) pigment." The video flashes an image of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, suggesting that the Ukrainian government has been given US support to resist Russian "aggression" primarily because its members are white.

This misrepresents the situation completely. The US-backed war in Ukraine, which threatens humanity itself with nuclear war between the US/NATO and Russia, the Gaza genocide, and the spiraling conflict with China are all parts of a new world war which the United States is waging to dominate the planet.

The Zelensky government, a dictatorial puppet regime riddled with fascists and ruled by oligarchs, has been given weapons by the US and NATO because of its willingness to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of its own people in the fratricidal war against Russia. According to some estimates, nearly 500,000 Ukrainians have died in the present conflict, with no protection offered to them because of their skin color.

As with the protests in the US and elsewhere, efforts in Ukraine to oppose the war are met with repression, slander and arrest. This has occurred with Bogdan Syrotiuk, a socialist opponent of the regimes of both Zelensky and Russia's Putin, who faces life imprisonment for his principled opposition to the capitalist regimes of Russia, Ukraine and NATO.

The hollowness of the explanation that racism lies at the root of these crises is inadvertently revealed in the lyrics of "Hind's Hall" itself. The sharpest commentary in Macklemore's rap is devoted to calling out to other musical entertainers who have remained silent about the genocide:

The music industry's quiet, complicit in their
platform of silence/
What happened to the artists, what you got to
say?/
If I was on a label you could drop me today/
I'll be fine with it because the heart fed my
page/
I want a ceasefire, f--- a response from Drake/

Macklemore is here referring to the public feud that has erupted between multi-platinum rapper-entertainers Kendrick Lamar and Drake (Aubrey Drake Graham), with which much of the media has been preoccupied.

Lamar, who is ritualistically promoted by the entertainment industry as a so-called "socially conscious" rap artist and the "voice of his generation" due to his many songs emphasizing identity politics, has said nothing publicly about the Gaza genocide. His fan page on social media has censored pro-Palestinian commentary.

Instead, Lamar has engaged in an inane feud with Drake, trading insults on songs and denouncing the rapper due to his biracial background.

Further revealing the vacuous atmosphere that pervades the cultural landscape, the release of "Hind's Hall" coincided with the opening of the Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The *Washington Post* reported that "as five tuxedoed men helped carry Gigi Hadid's yellow-rose-adorned Thom Browne gown up the green and beige steps... hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters in kaffiyehs were met (and, in some cases, arrested) by police at barricades along Madison Avenue and East 80th Street, just out of sight and earshot from the celebs pouring out of their black SUVs."

Needless to say, attendees at the event did nothing to protest the thuggish treatment of anti-genocide protesters, let alone the ongoing genocide.

Macklemore, who himself is white, has in his courageous stance unintentionally revealed the banality and conformity of racialist politics and the people who promote it.

"Hind's Hall" is a powerful expression of the mass opposition to the Israeli genocide in Palestine which should be built upon.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact