

Thousands of protesters march in Paris against Gaza genocide

Our reporters
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On Saturday, tens of thousands of people marched in Paris against the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, and the support for it from the governments of France and other NATO powers. On the eve of the European elections, protesters also criticized French President Emmanuel Macron, his promotion of far-right forces and his military escalation targeting Russia.

Aït, a French Palestinian, told the WSWs he was protesting the Gaza genocide and Macron's complicity:

They are carrying out a criminal policy of mass murder. All the presidents who have supported this genocide are the real terrorists and war criminals. ... If Palestine really belongs to [Israel], prove it. Why do it with war, by murdering women and children? No, there will be no deal, we will protest to the last Palestinian.

Aït also denounced French imperialism's plundering of public funds and social programs to finance war in Ukraine:

The biggest terrorist is the state, and Macron is a robber. And, moreover, France is now threatened with World War III because of all this assistance that they claim is helping Ukraine. That's false. They are buying Ukraine. It's an investment of public money, and we are paying for their fortunes. They are doing all that with public money, and in the meantime, the French people are struggling and can't pay for food.

He added, "I am Palestinian 100 percent. I am also Ukrainian, because Ukraine belongs to Ukrainians, not to Europe!"

Aït also attacked Macron's lying claims that he fought the far right during his presidential election campaigns against

neo-fascist Marine Le Pen. He said:

No one wants this government. They made us choose between plague and cholera. We voted against cholera, and here we are now. ... Democracy is dead.

He said that Macron is trying to silence the opposition of the large majority of the French people to genocide and war:

France is blocked. There is a very big half of the population that wants nothing of this war, but it does not have a voice. It is not given the right to say "non," we don't want Macron's policy, we don't want Israel's policy, we don't want America's policy. ... There is the police, that is, Macron's militia, and we are hemmed in on all sides. And if we say anything, we're called terrorists and given fines.

Mélanie told the WSWs she was "protesting against Israel's genocide against the Palestinians," explaining:

For me, the retaliation against Hamas is not justified, and there are many collateral victims. I think it is ethnic cleansing and an attempt to destroy Palestine to take advantage of what there is there and extend Israel's territory. I think it's hardcore Zionism. I condemn what Hamas did, but unfortunately I think Palestine had no other choice but to try to get out of that trap with this group. Today there are women and children who are being targeted in the camps, who await being burned alive, and for me this is intolerable.

“Israel is a sort of base in the Middle East for America and for NATO,” she added. “The French government is poisoned with Zionism, it is part of a broader agenda. ... Now I am somewhat ashamed to be French.”

Asked by the WSWs about fighting to unify the working class in a movement to block arms shipments to Israel and stop the genocide and imperialist war, Mélanie said she hopes for “an uprising of the masses, an uprising of humanity.”

She added:

That is why I am here. I encourage as many people as possible to come and to do the same, whether or not they have political labels. ... I want a collective uprising, even if we all have left-wing, socialist values that will help this.

Antonin, a high school student, said he had come to protest against genocide and France’s role: “It is a horror, it’s horrific. When we hear what the Israeli government says about Palestinians in Gaza, they are horrible, genocidal remarks.”

Antonin denounced the complicity of European governments:

Netanyahu’s government acts with impunity, it does whatever it wants and all it gets in return are warnings. But warnings are not enough. The UN passes resolutions against Israel, Israel does not respect them and nothing is done. The complicity of the Western governments, that is what is shocking. We say it is serious but we continue giving them weapons. Words are not enough, we must act.

Asked about how a new generation of youth sees the genocide and the danger of military escalation against Russia, Antonin replied: “Everyone is concerned, we must be very careful about the war, what is being done to Russia. People are asking themselves about what will come next.”

The WSWs interviewed Mustapha, a sympathizer of Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s France Unbowed (LFI) party. He said, “I think it is essential to come to support Palestine, the Palestinian people who are suffering, and especially on the eve of European elections that are important elections.”

He added:

The Israeli government wants to continue perpetrating a genocide, to have a scorched earth policy, to destroy everything in their path and not to allow the people of Gaza to return and rebuild. In the statements of the Israeli government, we can see that their policy is very simply to eradicate the Palestinian people by giving them no chance, except becoming refugees. This is unacceptable from the standpoint of international law. ... And France is not playing its role, it is not condemning the far-right regime in Israel presently.

When the WSWs explained that workers cannot set out to build a national movement to persuade the French government to stop supporting genocide and war, and that an international movement has to be built against imperialism, including the French imperialist state, he replied:

I heard Macron mention several times that he is moved, that he is indignant, looking at the struggle of the Palestinian people. But he is not up to the seriousness of events, nothing can be expected of him. He has opened a path for the far right, which he favors in every sense of the term.

Mustapha also stressed his concerns about military escalation against Russia:

Macron wants to send trainers. We are in a very scary place. Again, it’s unacceptable. Calling for war, we know very well that this favors those who are in power. This conflict is intolerable and we must always keep international law in mind. Those who will suffer will be those like you and me, who will be sent to fight for interests that are not their own.

When WSWs journalists said that the eruption of genocide and global war shows that workers cannot limit themselves to the purely national, parliamentary strategy proposed by Mélenchon, an ex-minister, Mustapha said he could understand people who argued in this way.



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