

NATO states denounce “antisemitism” after Israeli football hooligans riot in Amsterdam

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On the night of Wednesday to Thursday, Israeli football hooligans ran riot in Amsterdam, tearing down Palestinian flags, assaulting Arabs, and chanting anti-Gaza slogans. Some clashed with residents of Amsterdam, where a protest was planned against holding a game between the Maccabi Tel Aviv and Ajax Amsterdam football clubs during the Gaza genocide. Five people were taken to hospital, and yesterday the Israeli Foreign Ministry said all Maccabi fans were accounted for.

But Washington and European governments reacted with a deafening propaganda campaign, denouncing those who clashed with the hooligans as “antisemitic.” While no one was killed, far-right Dutch government strongman Geert Wilders is demanding a police crackdown, supposedly to stop a deadly “pogrom” against Jews. As of yesterday, at least 62 people had been detained in a wave of arrests across the city.

This propaganda campaign is a pack of lies, spun by governments complicit in genocide by their support for Israel’s genocide in Gaza. While they are outraged that five Israeli football hooligans were taken to hospital with light injuries, they support the mass murder of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

US President Joe Biden tweeted: “The Antisemitic attacks on Israeli soccer fans in Amsterdam are despicable and echo dark moments in history when Jews were persecuted. We’ve been in touch with Israeli and Dutch officials and appreciate Dutch authorities’ commitment to holding the perpetrators accountable. We must relentlessly fight Antisemitism, wherever it emerges.”

European governments made similar comments. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz denounced the clashes as “intolerable” because they “attack us all,” and Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof called them a “terrible

antisemitic attack.” Equating the clashes with the Holocaust, French President Emmanuel Macron “firmly condemned” violence that he claimed recalls “the most horrific hours of history.” Within the Netherlands, the press campaign is largely directed by Wilders himself.

“A pogrom in the streets of Amsterdam,” Wilders claimed in one tweet, adding: “Muslims with Palestinian flags hunting down Jews. I will NOT accept that. NEVER. The authorities will be held accountable for their failure to protect the Israeli citizens. Never again.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wanted on charges of crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, said he views the “incident with the utmost gravity.” He demanded “vigorous and swift action” by Dutch authorities.

These hysterical, unsubstantiated claims that the football clashes were antisemitic acts, or even deadly pogroms, aim to justify a mass police crackdown. No one was killed, nor have Dutch authorities provided evidence that the hooligans who were punched, or in one case thrown into a river, were targeted because they were Jewish. Rather, there is massive video evidence, backed up by statements of Amsterdam police, that Maccabi hooligans’ assaults on people and property in Amsterdam, together with their pro-genocide chants, provoked an eruption of anger.

There is reason to believe, moreover, that this was a deliberate provocation arranged between Israeli authorities and the far-right Dutch government. In the days before the Maccabi-Ajax game, Dutch newspapers *De Telegraaf* and *Voetbalzone* reported that agents of Israel’s Mossad foreign intelligence agency would be traveling among the Maccabi fans, supposedly to protect them from Dutch protesters.

At the stadium, just before the game, the Maccabi fans refused to honor the minute of silence for the thousands of victims of the Valencia floods in Spain, apparently because Madrid has called to recognize a Palestinian state. However, tensions exploded after the game, which Maccabi lost 5-0.

Maccabi hooligans “began attacking houses of people in Amsterdam with Palestinian flags, so that’s actually where the violence started,” Amsterdam city councilman Jazie Veldhuyzen told Al Jazeera yesterday. “As a reaction, Amsterdammers mobilised themselves and countered the attacks that started on Wednesday by the Maccabi hooligans.”

Maccabi hooligans rampaged across the city, tearing up Palestinian flags, hitting taxis driven by Arabic drivers with crowbars, and chanting pro-genocide slogans. These included “There are no schools in Gaza because there are no children left,” “F*ck Palestine,” “IDF [Israel Defense Forces] f*ck the Arabs,” and “Death to Arabs! We will win.”

Amsterdam police chief Peter Holla confirmed reports of attacks that night by Maccabi fans. He told France24 news: “Violence had begun Wednesday night between fans. During the night, there were incidents on both sides. The Maccabi fans took down a flag from a façade of the Rokin [canal] in Amsterdam and destroyed a taxi. One Palestinian flag was burned.”

Comparisons by Biden, Macron, and others between clashes with Maccabi football hooligans and the Holocaust are politically obscene lies. During World War II, three-quarters of the Netherlands’ 140,000 Jews were deported and murdered on an industrial scale in Nazi death camps. When the working class opposed these deportations, as in the February 1941 Amsterdam general strike, Nazi authorities and members of Anton Mussert’s pro-Nazi, Dutch National Socialist Movement (NSB) gunned down dozens of workers, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

The force carrying out a genocide today is not the working class of Amsterdam, but the Zionist regime, backed by NATO governments. These include Wilders’ pathologically anti-Muslim Party for Freedom (PVV), which is driving the current police crackdown in Amsterdam, and whose party flag is inscribed with the gull that was the symbol of Mussert’s NSB.

Moreover, the Zionist regime is working with the European imperialist powers to create conditions for

further provocations like the one this week in Amsterdam. Yesterday, Netanyahu announced he had asked Mossad to deploy its operatives to other international sporting events involving Israeli athletes: “I instructed the head of Mossad and other officials to prepare action plans, alert systems and our organization amid this new situation.”

This order is all the more explosive in that Mossad is infamous for its brutal methods, including targeted assassinations overseas, and that a controversial France-Israel League of Nations football match is currently set to go forward on November 14.

The Macron government, deeply unpopular and relying on the parliamentary support of far-right forces like the National Rally, is desperately seeking to strangle working class opposition to the Gaza genocide. This week, far-right French Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau threatened the Paris Saint Germain football club with investigations and prosecution, after its fans displayed a large “Free Palestine” flag at a game.

Yesterday, Retailleau rejected calls to move the France-Israel football match scheduled for November 14 out of the Stade de France, located in the largely Muslim north suburbs of Paris. Retailleau claimed moving the League of Nations match would “mean abdicating to threats of violence and to antisemitism.” This threatens to trigger new clashes between workers, this time in France, and Israeli football hooligans backed by Mossad and French police.



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