

50,000 protest in Madrid against Gaza genocide of Palestinians and PSOE-Sumar complicity

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On Saturday, tens of thousands of workers and youth flooded the streets of Madrid to denounce the ongoing genocide in Gaza and demand an immediate end to Spain's arms trade and diplomatic ties with the Zionist state of Israel. The demonstration, organised by the Network in Solidarity with Palestine (RESCOP), coincided with the 77th anniversary of the 1948 Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians that accompanied the founding of the Israeli state.

This protest came amid intensifying atrocities in Gaza, where the Israeli government has launched what it calls the "concluding moves" of its military campaign. These include a full occupation of the Gaza Strip, mass internment in concentration camps staffed by US private contractors, and forced marches or deportation. This plan, endorsed by US President Donald Trump, aims to ethnically cleanse Gaza and mirrors the Nazi regime's "final solution." Starvation is enforced via a total blockade on food, water, and electricity, with the backing of the US and European powers.

Under the slogan "Move for Palestine," protesters marched from Atocha to Puerta del Sol chanting, "It's not war, it's genocide!" "Boycott Israel!" and "You, the Zionists, are the real terrorists." These slogans expressed the growing outrage of workers against the Israeli regime and the imperialist powers arming it.

Saida Ghodaieh Curiel, president of the Hispano-Palestinian Association Jerusalem, denounced "all we have experienced are displacements, killings, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people—now more than ever, with a genocide that is being televised and carried out with impunity, aided by the complicity of Western countries."

The Madrid protest was one of over 100 held across Spain, including in Barcelona, Valencia, and Bilbao. It

forms part of a global anti-war movement, as millions have mobilised over the past year and a half against Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza, which has killed over 50,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

Despite the mass character of the protest, Left Populist and Stalinist parties such as Podemos and Izquierda Unida (IU) cynically sought to co-opt the mobilization. These forces, part of the capitalist state machine, attempted to divert mass anger into appeals to the very institutions complicit in the genocide.

Antonio Maíllo, general coordinator of IU, joined the protest along with other Stalinists such as Enrique Santiago, general secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, despite the fact that his party is part of Sumar, a partner in the coalition government, and the protest was also directed against the government for continuing to trade with Israel.

"There are thousands of activists who are the pride of our organisation, who have been working for decades in support of the Palestinian people. And that is the legitimacy that allows us to take this stance, a stance that no one in our organisation questions," he said.

Just days earlier, the Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau revealed that between October 2023 and March 2025, Spain exported 88 arms shipments to Israel worth €5.3 million. These included ammunition, explosives, and drone parts, despite the Spanish government's supposed suspension on arms sales. In addition, Spain awarded 46 contracts worth over €1 billion to Israeli weapons firms since the beginning of the assault on Gaza.

These revelations further expose the PSOE-Sumar government's cynicism, from its hollow recognition of a non-existent Palestinian state to its rhetorical support for international investigations into genocide, and its repeated

calls for a ceasefire that Tel Aviv blatantly ignores.

Podemos leader Ione Belarra called the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the “Hitler of our time,” while lamenting the “terrifying history lesson” being given by Zionism, “doing to the Palestinian people the same thing the Nazis did to the Jews.” She also accused Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of lying in Parliament when he claimed that Spain does not trade arms with Israel.

However, such criticism is a fraud. Podemos is a key party supporting the minority PSOE-Sumar government and could even bring the government down in parliament. Moreover, Podemos has already made itself complicit in the genocide by its months-long arms sales to Israel. In the 45 days from the October 7 Palestinian uprising, until Podemos left government in 2023, she sat in government as Madrid traded millions of euros in weapons with Israel.

In fact, despite Belarra calling Netanyahu the “Hitler of our time,” when Podemos was part of the governing coalition with the PSOE from 2020 to 2023, Spain’s political, economic, and military ties with the far-right Netanyahu regime deepened to record levels. During this period, the Spanish government not only maintained but escalated arms exports to Israel, including shipments of ammunition, explosives, and components for military aircraft and drones, despite Israel’s escalating war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank. These transactions, many of which took place while Podemos held ministerial posts, expose the party’s full complicity.

Pseudo-left groups orbiting Podemos also joined the protest. Among them was the Corriente Revolucionaria de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (CRT), affiliated with Argentina’s Morenista PTS and Révolution Permanente in France.

CRT spokesperson Lucía Nistal declared: “This is the time to continue pushing forward all mobilizations for Palestine, as well as to expand and multiply all those examples where the working class refuses to manufacture the weapons that are later sold to the genocidal state, and refuses to load or transport them.” She added: “We must demand, forcefully, that the unions take a stand and call major general strikes in solidarity with the Palestinian people. It is time for action, not words.”

But Nistal’s appeal to Spain’s main union bureaucracies, CCOO and UGT, misleads workers into relying on institutions complicit in the genocide. As the WSWS has exposed, these bureaucracies have actively supported the PSOE-Sumar government and remained silent on Spain’s arms exports. They have consistently

suppressed working-class opposition to war and militarism.

Indeed, these same unions have thrown their full support behind the European Union’s massive rearment agenda, aligning themselves with the ruling class’s preparations for war. The EU has unveiled plans to mobilize €800 billion for armaments, marking the largest rearment drive on the continent since World War II.

In Spain, the government has accelerated its military spending, bringing forward the target of allocating 2 percent of GDP to defense, with a total of €33.123 billion already committed. Union leaders, such as UGT’s Secretary General Pepe Álvarez, have justified this militarization under the guise of ‘strategic autonomy,’ advocating for increased arms production and even suggesting a defense tax on citizens.

By calling on such forces to act, CRT diverts growing opposition into dead ends. What is needed is not appeals to corrupt union leaders but the building of independent rank-and-file organisations fighting for a socialist and internationalist program against war and genocide.

Stopping the genocide requires the building of a new, internationalist socialist movement in the working class. This means breaking decisively from the PSOE, Sumar, Podemos, and the trade union bureaucracies that collaborate with them. It means mobilizing workers across Europe and the world in mass strike action, not only to stop the flow of weapons to Israel, but to fight against the imperialist system that produces genocide.

The demands raised at the Madrid protest, for an arms embargo, sanctions, and justice, can only be realised through the independent political organisation of the working class. This requires the construction of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in Spain and throughout Europe, dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism on a world scale.



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