

Protesters at mass London demonstration denounce Israel's Gaza genocide

Our reporters
19 May 2025

Socialist Equality Party (SEP) Assistant National Secretary Thomas Scripps spoke to the WSWS about the significance of Saturday's national rally in London against the genocide in Gaza, and the SEP's upcoming public meeting in the capital on May 31: "Trump's war on free speech: The case of Momodou Taal".

At the SEP's stall on Whitehall, protester **Alistair** told the WSWS, "As a British citizen I am absolutely horrified that my taxpayer money support this. The government that is supposed to represent me is assisting this genocide. It's giving military support. Its allowing weapons to be sold there. Aside from on a basic human level of not wanting to see people massacred and not starved to death, I also feel ashamed that my own government is complicit in this".

Asked about the Labour government's clampdown on the national protests in London against the genocide he said, "It's disgusting, it's an attack on our basic civil liberties... it shows that what we're doing is working. There is a fear there from the government... if we were useless they wouldn't need to put all this energy into putting down protesters.

"It's absolutely horrific. I was reading recently about these young people that were arrested at the Elbit weapons factory. Their houses were raided at 5 a.m., houses were smashed up. They've been held in prison under terror legislation for several months now, something like solitary confinement, an awful situation... completely undemocratic, unlawful. This should be headline news. It should be something that every person knows about and is screaming out about."

Vítor, a student from Brazil, said, "I'm here today for this national protest against the genocide in Palestine... The only way to stop it is workers all of the world, here in the UK, in Israel, in America, in all of Europe... stop sending guns... and Israel needs to stop the

war right now."

Billy, a lifelong Labour supporter, said, "I'm trying to end the war in Gaza, Israel's war. Someone has to provide a voice for the voiceless. It falls on deaf ears where our governments are involved.

"The least I can do is join these marches, especially on the anniversary of the 77-year Nakba, when it all started, not October 7. Keir Starmer is the wrong person in this job. He is Blue Labour... He needs to move over or he will lose the support of traditional Labour supporters. Shame on you Keir Starmer!"

Natya who is self-employed, said, "I'm here to do my best to speak up for what's happening against the Palestinians, this genocide that has been going on for 19 months. And even though we come out month after month, week after week, the government is still not listening to us. We are the people, our voice is power."

Asked her thoughts about the Labour government, she replied, "It is atrocious what they're doing right now, it's probably worse than what the Tories have done. Labour is responsible for the worst genocide ever."

Natya said the way forward was "Stop arming Israel. Let's start there. Let's not start in Gaza. Let's just start there."

On the attack on democratic rights of those attending demonstrations in London against genocide, she said, "It's freedom of speech, but they don't like what you say. That's all it is. They don't like what you say."

Jan, a conservation worker from Reading said, "I don't like the genocide that's going on, and in general I don't like the project of the State of Israel. As far as I'm concerned, it's an ethnic cleansing operation. It's kicking people off their lands, massacring them, and imprisoning them as well.

"It seems to me like Israel's fulfilling its dream of a

Greater Israel, and it's taking even more than it's been doing for a while. So it's taken more of Lebanon from what's happening in Gaza."

Asked about the attacks on demonstrators' democratic rights, he replied, "They're cracking down on freedom of speech because they want to crackdown on anyone who wants to take action against what's happening. It seems to me like it's at least British collusion with Israel because they're selling weapons and they're doing big business with it. And that's our companies here, weapons companies, Israeli companies. They make weaponry that kills people in Gaza."

On the F-35 fighter jets used by Israel, which British firms make 15 percent of the component for, Jan said the Starmer government "cancelled a few licences, but those were kept. Recently there was a report that looked into this and found that thousands and thousands of weapons have been sold since when they say they've cancelled a few of the licences.

"So it's trickery, and someone asked Starmer about this in Parliament, and he was insulting rather than answering the question, which is no surprise, given that he's a war criminal. He should be facing charges, probably, him, [Foreign Secretary] David Lammy, all those people on top, people in our armed forces who have taken their orders."

Jan said, "There should be sanctions on Israel, there should be state-level sanctions so we don't have to go to a shop and sort through goods and find things that are linked to Israel. There should be state-level sanctions, an end to weapons. Any company that's aiding Israel's military should be shut down here. They should be stopped, they should be able to convert to something else or just stop their business. I don't want to see weapons coming from here, over to Israel to kill people. They're innocent people, men, women and children in Gaza."

WSWS reporters raised that we were calling for workers internationally to prevent the shipment of military supplies to Israel, as carried out in Morocco and Greece recently. Jan said he supported such action, "I would call the people in the military to protest as well, because it's very important. Even if you're a rank-and-file soldier, learn about it, do something about it. If you have information you can share. There are lots of journalists, many of whom have been suppressed now.

You can go to the press and expose what's happening."



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