

Workers and students in Manchester and Bradford speak out against Iran war, Palestine Action ban

Our reporters
24 June 2025

Protests took place across the UK Monday against the war on Iran, the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the Labour government's plans to ban Palestine Action as a "terrorist organisation".

World Socialist Web Site reporters spoke with demonstrators in London, Manchester and Bradford.

In Manchester, **Dominic**, a student of International Studies, told the WSW, "I've come to protest because I think the struggle of the working class is inherently tied with foreign policy. We're looking at the impact of a capitalist system that makes profits from businesses that involve war, and the profits go straight to the one percent and impact people across the globe.

"I think if we don't do anything now then it will mean more wars, and the only alternative to this system is a socialist one. I think global action is the tradition that we need to keep going forward. Nationalism is a threat to that.

"The Labour Party now is just carrying on like 'New Labour' in the 1990s, its completely lost touch with working people. And the trade unions have just become another business."

Maisie, who works in the NHS, told our reporters, "What we're seeing is Israel trying to take over the Middle East, to oppress more countries... They're an imperialist, colonialist force which we're funding as a country; we are literally putting money into murdering children, and people who are not terrorists or soldiers in a war."

"I feel no hope with Labour. They've got no idea about what it's like to be working class anymore."

Isaac, who recently completed a master's degree in law at Manchester University, argued, "You've got to stand up for our rights, our right to protest and all

democratic rights, otherwise our government will slip into authoritarianism and take them all away.

"It's very sad that it is a Labour government that is illegalizing Palestine Action. It's the same thing in America, but even more authoritarianism, and Britain is following the same playbook. Seeing what's happening over there and seeing how it can just be echoed here, it very quickly becomes terrifying. We have to make sure it doesn't happen."

Daniel, a recent graduate, described how "Public support, especially for something like a war on Iran, is next to none. No one wants it. No one wants to see what is going on in Gaza carry on. The justifications they've made for it are ridiculous; they're not representative of the UK people en masse. It's a disgrace, sending jets, weapons... It's not the mandate of the people at all."

Jess, a musician, said, "I think what is happening in the Middle East is atrocious. It's just repeating the patterns of previous wars. It's the UK government, the US government, Israel that are responsible."

Farouk, who works in the public sector, explained, "I've come to protest against the proscribing of Palestine Action, a legitimate peaceful organisation in the UK.

"It is limiting free speech. If you shut PA down, then they're going to go after the next one and, ultimately, you end up with a one-sided argument.

"What we are facing are repressive regimes in the US and increasingly in the UK. What is happening in the Middle East is very openly being done by the US, with the Starmer government arguing like lawyers for Israel."

Amelia, a digital developer, accused, "The

government refuses to have any humanity... Keir Starmer's approach to the whole thing has been absolutely disgusting...

"Israel has seen they've been able to get away with so much in Gaza, they've seen that world leaders aren't really going to do much about it, and they're just pushing further and further to see how far they can get."

The protest in Bradford, organised by Bradford Friends of Palestine, took place outside City Hall.

Ahmed, a rail worker, said, "The attack on Iran is totally unjustified, it's also a total threat to democracy.

"Just recently, the Brize Norton protest led to politicians wanting to proscribe Palestine Action; that's an attack on our democracy. Before we know it, we won't be able to protest. We won't be able to show the Palestinian flag.

"It's one rule for them and another rule for everyone else, where they can go join in wars and say, 'we have a right to defend ourselves', but this notion of having the right to defend yourselves is only applicable to one side, apparently. They can go into Iran and drop bunker bombs and want them now to sit down and negotiate and discuss some sort of deal.

"In the Middle East, Israel is allowed to have the nuclear weapon but if anyone else thinks of coming up with a sort of plan, all governed by the relevant bodies, then apparently that's not enough."

Toheed explained of the imperialist powers and their wars: "They'll make up a story or an agenda as to the reason or right... They do this stuff only to go to these countries to take their natural resources... All in the name of fighting off terrorism. But in reality, they're the terrorists themselves; they go in there and terrorise innocent civilians."

"Protests, I don't really think they do much... It does build a movement, it gets people together... But at the end of the day the people that are doing all this horrible stuff like genocide, they are still in charge...

"I think that the only way something will actually happen, basically, is like, would you call it a revolution... Throw them out of office, out of power."



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