

Protests against Gaza genocide continue internationally, Starmer government denounces UK campus demos

Our reporters
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Protests marking two years since the October 7 pretext for Israel's ongoing genocide of the Palestinians were held Tuesday in cities around the globe. In Europe, demonstrations were held in London, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Geneva, Athens, Milan, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, and Stockholm. Protests also took place in Jakarta, Indonesia and Sydney, Australia.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported, "In the Netherlands, pro-Palestinian activists splashed red paint on Amsterdam's Royal Palace in protest against a decision by the city mayor to ban a pro-Palestinian rally while permitting a pro-Israeli event.

"In Turkey, a protest was expected outside an energy company over its exports to Israel. In Sweden, demonstrators were expected to welcome back participants of a Gaza aid flotilla detained by Israel, including climate activist Greta Thunberg."

In Britain, around a dozen protests were held on campuses—including in Sheffield, Leeds, Bristol, Nottingham, Leicester, Birmingham, Sussex, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London—as well as an "inter-university march" in central London, organised by students across four higher education institutions.

The march, announced with the statement "Two years of genocide and our institutions remain complicit", gathered at King's College London on the Strand at 2 p.m. Around 400 students marched from there to the London School of Economics, and University College London, before finishing with a rally at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

The campus protests were held in defiance of calls by a pro-Zionist British political establishment. They followed already scheduled pro-Palestinian protests which took place between Thursday and Saturday—in the aftermath of the killing of two Jewish worshipers in Manchester at the

hands of a terrorist and accidental police gunfire.

The Labour government, up to its neck in the crimes of the Israeli government, denounced those demonstrations as an affront to the entire Jewish community.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer upped the ante on Tuesday, writing in the *Times* that protests held on the October 7 anniversary of Hamas's armed incursion into Israel were "un-British" and showed a "total loss of empathy and humanity". He entirely passed over Israel's slaughter of more than 60,000 Palestinians, including over 20,000 children (according to official, undercounted figures), in the two years since.

Starmer's piece was headlined "We must stand ready to fight despicable antisemitism" invoking the ruling elite's routine conflation of antisemitism with opposition to the Israeli government's war crimes. Specifically referencing student protests, he declared, "It's un-British to have so little respect for others," before slandering, "And that's before some of them decide to start chanting hatred towards Jewish people all over again."

The prime minister used the opportunity to confirm plans to "legislate to give the police new powers to act against repeat protests".

Conservative shadow home secretary Chris Philp used Starmer's words as a run-up to insist protesting foreign students be deported, mimicking the dictatorial agenda of US President Donald Trump.

Tory leadership rival Robert Jenrick, who this summer aligned himself with far-right mobilisations against asylum seekers, told a fringe event at the Tory party conference the planned protests were a "f*cking disgrace."

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey said it was "completely wrong" for the protests to go ahead.

The Metropolitan Police imposed Public Order Act

restrictions in the inter-university march in London, dictating the route it must follow. A separate march from the BBC to Downing Street was also subjected to strict conditions, banning protesters from assembling in one area, confining the final rally to another and enforcing an 8 p.m. curfew.

World Socialist Web Site reporters attended the protests and spoke with students.

In **London**, several hundred students gathered outside KCL displayed an 80ft banner which included the names of thousands of people killed by the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza. As they marched to LSE, UCL and SOAS they chanted, “We are the students. We won’t be silenced. Stop the bombing now, now, now” and “Keir Starmer you can’t hide; we charge you with genocide.”

At the final rally, SOAS student Muna told our reporters, “It’s the two-year marking of a genocide. I feel like right now we’re reaching a turning point where people are starting to wake up and understand.”

US President Trump’s “peace plan”, backed by Tony Blair, was “the clearest example of imperialism that we’ve ever seen; the most disgusting thing I’ve ever seen. I think Tony Blair is a demon; that’s what I think of him. Getting him involved in the Middle East is like getting Hitler involved.”

Responding to attacks on the right to protest, Muna said, “Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said something about how, just because we have freedoms, it doesn’t mean we should be able to exercise them all the time. I mean that sounds like fascism to me. Our government is becoming more and more far-right every day and making me scared about the state of our country and the future state of our country, for sure.”

Muna added, “They keep attacking protests as ‘disruption’. That’s the whole point: you’re meant to disrupt, that’s what protesting is. And if you see a genocide taking place and you’re seeing that your government is aiding and abetting it, what else should you do but disrupt that?”

“I think what Italy did [the recent protests and general strike, involving millions], honestly, I think we should be doing that as well: fully disrupting the entire, I guess, flow of the country and showing that this should be something at the forefront of our minds.”

In **Sheffield**, around 100 people participated in the demonstration outside the students’ union building at the University Sheffield.

Student Aleiza told WSWS reporters, “There is a lot of stigma online about being pro-Palestinian or saying you

want an end to the genocide. But when you come to a protest like this, you see how many others share the same view—that they want to stop a genocide which has been going on for two years now.

“Keir Starmer has recognised Palestine as a state while calling pro-Palestinian protesters antisemitic. If you recognise the state, but don’t recognise what atrocities are going on in it and why people are protesting, that is a little hypocritical.

“The fact that Netanyahu was able to defend himself against the war crimes at the United Nations speaks volumes about how much backing he’s getting from the US. Trump himself has a lot of blood on his hands. His support for Netanyahu, and the amount of stocks and bonds in billions he has bought [in Israel], shows he’s as responsible—if not worse—for endorsing what’s happening.

“The arrests of so many pro-Palestinian protestors is to stop the power of the working class; the protests in Italy and Greece shows the impact this can have. Starmer wants to stop that. As prime minister, he wants control over the population. Arresting people at protests is his method of control. We can’t fall into that trap. It’s been two years now, the more people rise up and speak, the better it will be.

“The role of capitalism in this genocide has been very apparent. The amount of weapons and money flowing into Israel—especially from the US—billions, and the companies here which send it weapons: it does play a very big role.

“They call Ukraine a humanitarian crisis but ignore the Palestinian genocide, where more than 60,000 people have been murdered. The mindset is completely different; it’s a massive double standard.”



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