

Netherlands: 250,000 join anti-war protests against Gaza genocide and criminal interception of Sumud flotilla

WSWS reporters from Amsterdam
8 October 2025

As the Israeli military intensifies its genocide deep into Gaza, plunging millions of Palestinians into conditions of unimaginable suffering, outrage among workers and youth over the catastrophe has sparked another massive wave of protests across the globe this past weekend. On October 5, 2025, in Amsterdam, the third "Red Line" demonstration took place, marking the largest anti-war protest in the Netherlands since the anti-nuclear protests in 1981.

What began as a protest of 100,000 people in The Hague on May 18 grew in less than four weeks to 150,000 at the second "Red Line" demonstration on June 15—followed by the fall of the Dutch government—surging to an estimated 250,000 demonstrators in Amsterdam last weekend.

The anti-war protests and strikes that have swept across the country over the past two years have transformed the Netherlands' major cities into centers of global resistance against war, genocide, austerity, and authoritarian rule. Hundreds of thousands of Dutch and immigrant workers and youth across all ages, industries, and walks of life filled Amsterdam's canal-lined streets and squares in solidarity with the defenseless Palestinians.

Homemade placards and hand-sewn banners and flags demonstrated widespread anger toward the Netanyahu regime and the far-right Dutch caretaker minority government. The largest anti-war demonstration came just three weeks before the Dutch snap elections scheduled for October 29, in which, according to a recent poll, as many as 42 percent consider the war in Gaza a decisive political issue.

The Dutch ruling elite has a long history of political complicity with the Zionist state, from its inception on stolen Palestinian land to the present Netanyahu administration, with which it maintains close economic and military collaboration. These ties have made both regimes a focus of intense opposition among Dutch workers and youth.

Dutch exports licenses for fighter-jet components and other military hardware to Israel, with total arms-exports to Israel reported as US \$33 million in 2024. Recent court rulings have challenged but not halted any of these licences—one of the central demands of university students engaged in years-long

sit-in protests across campuses.

The radicalization of thousands of workers and young people across the Netherlands by two years of barbaric slaughter of Palestinians has sharply exposed the gulf separating the sentiments of the vast majority of the population and the establishment parties.

At the Amsterdam rally, WSWS reporters distributed leaflets featuring two articles: "Global Protests Continue Over Israel's Seizure of Sumud Flotilla" and "Netherlands Set for October Snap Election Amid Crisis of Bourgeois Rule." The questions raised in both articles engaged participants in extensive discussions.

A significant segment of Amsterdam's Jewish community also joined the protest with placards condemning the genocide. Many drew parallels between Netanyahu's regime and the Nazi Third Reich, highlighting both the historical trauma their families endured during the Holocaust and the suffering now faced by Palestinians.

Before the Holocaust, Amsterdam had the largest Jewish community in the Netherlands and was a leading centre of Jewish cultural life in Europe. Under Nazi occupation, within five years, more than 80 percent of the city's Jewish population was exterminated.

Zyanya Breuer told the WSWS:

I'm an anti-Zionist Jew, and I recognise Zionism as a system of Jewish supremacy trying to take the land and keep Palestinian people with fewer rights. The lack of the right to return is really a huge problem. And that it is an apartheid state. So, I think that the world needs to wake up to this and be able to handle it in the ways that we've tried to fight injustice in the past.

I think it's really important that our Jewish bloc is here today, to say that our name as a Jewish community won't be used to validate this. I think it's a huge lie that Israel is saying always that it's the only safe place for Jews in the world. In fact, I think it's the most dangerous place for Jews in the world, and I think the

fact that they conflate Judaism and Zionism makes me unsafe, makes a lot of us unsafe, because then we're automatically assumed to support these injustices, which is really unfair.

Ultimately, Jewish history has taught us to stand up against injustices. It's not to just remember what happened to us and protect only us, but to protect everyone that's oppressed.

Among Amsterdam's Jewish population, opinions on the genocide of Palestinians are divided.

I mean, like any group of people, we're not a monolith. We are all free to have our own views and opinions. So, there's a divide. And it makes it difficult for Jews to speak out because they're afraid. Maybe they feel really critical of Israel or against the genocide, but they feel that they'll be alienated from their friends or family if they speak out. Definitely, in Jewish communities there's a big requirement to be very loyal to Israel because Israel has done a really good job with the propaganda to support that.

I've been watching my father unpack this for the last two years, and it's been really painful for him. But also quite beautiful to see him wake up to the reality and realise that everything he's been taught—the history of that region—was missing information.

On Dutch government complicity in the genocide, she added:

Yeah, absolutely. The Dutch government continues to send fighter-jet parts and other types of weapons, dogs, and other training connected to the Dutch economy through tech companies.

University students formed a significant portion of the demonstrators. **Nico**, from the University of Amsterdam, requesting to keep her identity hidden from prosecution by the state, held a placard quoting Albert Einstein:

Yes, Albert Einstein wrote an open letter to the New York Times in 1948. It was signed by him and by Hannah Arendt and about ten other Jewish intellectuals. I think I'm holding up one line. He describes Israeli politics as, 'closely akin to the Nazi and fascist parties steeped in ultra-nationalism, religious mysticism, and racial superiority.' And obviously nothing's changed,

and it just goes to show that people warned us 80 years ago.

Obviously, Zionism and ethno-supremacy in Israel-Palestine were not stopped, so it's only grown to be this bigger cancer that's been this slow genocide for close to 100 years. I like showing that to people because everyone knows Albert Einstein, but they don't necessarily know that he spoke out on many social issues, also on racism in the US. Having him say these strong words is important.

I would suggest everyone read the entire letter sent to the *New York Times*. It's like a page long. The language is very clear. And hopefully now—every generation has probably at some point thought, okay, now there's enough mobilisation to end this apartheid regime. In that respect, the saying is: 'No one's free until Palestine is free.'

I'd love to see more, like the ports closing, the things you see in Italy, Spain, Morocco. Oh yeah, I would love to see that type of class solidarity here as well.

When asked whether she wanted to add anything more for WSWs readers across the world, she added: "Study the history of the conflict!"

These sentiments and demands voiced in the city of Amsterdam must be linked with the broader movement already developing in the working class internationally against austerity, war, and the destruction of the livelihoods and living conditions of workers and youth. The same imperialist governments, including the criminal and bellicose Dutch bourgeoisie, that funnel weapons of death to the Zionist regime are erecting dictatorial forms of rule at home to suppress popular opposition to austerity, military rearmament, and world war.

There can be no lasting solution for either the Jewish or Palestinian people within the framework of capitalism, which is based on private property of the means of production and the reactionary framework of the nation-state. The struggle against genocide in Gaza is inseparable from the struggle for socialism in the Netherlands and internationally. Only the International Committee of the Fourth International, armed with its vast historical experience, is positioned to meet this challenge.



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