

Spanish workers and students stage national stoppages against Gaza genocide

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Hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers and students took part in a day of nationwide stoppages and protests Wednesday, organised by the main trade union federations and student organisations, against the genocide in Gaza. They did so despite wall-to-wall media coverage proclaiming the success of Trump's "peace deal".

The Workers Commissions (CCOO), linked to the pseudo-left parties Podemos and Sumar, which govern jointly with the Socialist Party (PSOE), and the social-democratic General Union of Workers (UGT), with nearly a million members each, called for two-hour stoppages in each shift, covering morning, afternoon, and night.

The anarcho-syndicalist General Confederation of Labour (CGT), with around 100,000 members, called a 24-hour general strike across all sectors and territories. In the Basque Country, the pro-separatist trade unions including LAB, ELA, Etxalde, and HIRU organised three-hour stoppages and demonstrations in the main cities.

The Student Union (Sindicato de Estudiantes) and various youth organisations called for walkouts in secondary schools and universities, which were observed by 80 percent of students.

In the Basque Country, 40 percent of the teachers in public schools went on strike, while in the healthcare sector it was 5.3 percent. Public transport was partially affected during the early hours of the morning. The Balearic Islands reported 563 teachers on full day strike, around 4 percent. In Galicia, nearly 9 percent among workers in the Galician justice sector and around 2 percent in the general administration, education, and healthcare sectors went on strike.

Throughout the day, protests and pickets took place in dozens of cities. In Pamplona around 10,000 joined a

noon march headed by a tractor draped in the Palestinian flag behind a banner reading "Stop genocide. Workers with Palestine." In Bilbao thousands marched through the city, staging boycotts outside firms denounced as complicit with Israel, including clothes retailer Zara and Banco Sabadell.

In León hundreds rallied at the cathedral, stopping at a Carrefour to call for a consumer boycott. In Logroño, student-led contingents gathered outside the central government office. In Murcia more than 500 rallied outside the Government Delegation office. In Córdoba students targeted Escribano, a company linked to Israeli armaments technology, and announced an evening rally.

Barcelona saw the largest early-morning attempts to disrupt economic activity. A student-led picket of thousands assembled at the central square of Plaça Universitat, blocking the Gran Via, while access points to the main logistics area in the city, Zona Franca, were repeatedly targeted. Waving Palestinian flags, the crowd chanted, "This is not a war, it's a genocide," "Long live the struggle of the Palestinian people," and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." Actor Willy Toledo joined an early blockade at the port to denounce the peace deal as "fake".

The Catalan Transport Service reported that all road closures in the city were later lifted, though southbound bottlenecks persisted at the city gateways. University of Barcelona authorities suspended academic activity.

The Madrid march, between Atocha and Puerta del Sol, brought together 15,000 young people under the slogan "Stop everything to stop the genocide," with placards declaring, "Peace with genociders is a farce" and chants of "Palestine will win!"

These were partial strike stoppages by significant but small sections of workers rather than a concerted

national shutdown. At least 40 protests were held across the country, largely dominated by students and youth. This reflects the deep and continuing opposition among broad layers of workers and young people to the genocide in Gaza and the complicity of Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)–Sumar government.

But what is needed is the development of a unified political movement of the working class across Europe and internationally, independent of all the capitalist parties and trade union bureaucracies, armed with a socialist and anti-imperialist perspective directed against the source of war itself, the capitalist system.

These were the first national strike actions by Spain's major trade union confederations since the start of Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza in October 2023. For two years, the trade unions have confined themselves to issuing rhetorical appeals for "peace" and "respect for international law" while maintaining their alliance with the PSOE-Sumar government that armed and politically supported Israel, despite stunts like recognising a non-existent Palestinian state and calling for the exclusion of Israel from Eurovision.

Only last month, after nearly two years of genocide, the PSOE–Sumar government announced an arms embargo on Israel. Even this measure is largely symbolic. It leaves the bulk of Spain's military collaboration with Israel untouched, permits ongoing contracts with the Israeli defence industry, and establishes no inspection mechanism for Israeli vessels docking in Spanish ports.

Authorising strike action and protests is a belated and calculated attempt to release public anger into safe channels. They were called before Trump's proposed imperialist takeover of Gaza, backed by European imperialist powers and the Middle Eastern Arab regimes, was rolled out.

The CCOO and UGT designed the action to be as harmless as possible. Two-hour stoppages were made without issuing any type of demands or proposing any follow-up action or meetings. In practice, they served to limit disruption and keep workers off the streets except at set times and venues. This was a tightly stage-managed protest so that workplaces would continue operating normally.

The smaller CGT, while posturing as more militant, followed the same basic line. In its statement before the strike, it warned that Israel has "systematically violated

every previous agreement" and that the new "agreement by phases" is "ambiguous and fragile," adding that "in any moment, tensions could provoke new attacks."

The CGT, however, has likewise limited its action to the level of protest politics, without any attempt to organise a unified shutdown of ports, airports, logistics hubs, or public transport. Where transport did slow, as at Barcelona's Sants station or in access roads to the Zona Franca, this was due to demonstrators, mostly students, confronting the police, not to industrial action by the working class.

The union bureaucracy will now do all in their power to stifle continued opposition to Trump's colonialist plan.



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