

Over 150,000 protest in London against Israel's war on Palestinians

Our reporters
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Over 150,000 people protested in central London Saturday to demand an end to Israel's war on the Palestinians.

The “March for Palestine, End the Violence, End Apartheid” was a collective act of defiance of the relentless pro-Israeli propaganda campaign of the media, the Conservative government and the Labour Party and the threats of mass arrests made by the Metropolitan Police. After years of unrelenting propaganda and witch-hunting portraying opposition to Israeli war crimes as “left anti-Semitism” it was a powerful demonstration of genuine popular sentiment.

The march set off from Broadcasting House, the Portland Place headquarters of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and proceeded through central London to a rally near the 10 Downing Street residence of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Masses of Palestine flags were waved, in a courageous snub to Home Secretary Suella Braverman's demand that this be made a criminal offense, as well as sounding the chant, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”. As the march assembled, protesters chanted “BBC, shame on you.”

London's Metropolitan Police mounted a massive intimidation operation, involving more than 1,000 officers. On Friday evening the Met announced on X/Twitter that a Section 12 order under the Public Order Act 1986 had been authorised from midday Saturday, warning that “Any person participating in or associated with the ‘Palestine Solidarity Campaign’ protest must not deviate from the route below [Portland Place to Regent's Street, Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square and Whitehall] or they may be subject to arrest.”

Part of Kensington High Street, where the Israeli Embassy is located, was locked down entirely with the Met warning, “Any person assembling here... in order to participate in or associate with the London Palestine Protest or Palestine Solidarity Campaign may be subject to arrest.” Sky News reported, “Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)... also ensured additional staff are available on call this weekend to provide charging advice to police if needed.”

The police made 15 arrests on the day.

On Sunday, the government stepped up its intimidation. Braverman wrote on X/Twitter, “To all those who saw fit to promote genocide, glorify terrorism and mock the murder of Jewish people, including women and babies—the police are coming for you.”

Organisers of the demonstration said another protest will take place next Saturday, October 21.

Featured speakers were associated with the Stop the War Coalition. Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the Labour Party, gave a typically anodyne speech that did not even mention the Labour Party's war crimes-supporting leader Sir Keir Starmer. He concluded with a bankrupt appeal to unnamed “political leaders in this country. Do not condone war crimes, do not condone the starvation and the denial of medicine to desperate people in Gaza or anywhere else. If you believe in international law, if you believe in human rights, then you must condemn what is happening in Gaza by the Israeli army.”

Stop the War Coalition convenor Lindsay German, introduced as “the leader of anti-war movement in Britain today,” insisted that the main task of those attending was to go away and enlist the support of Labour MPs. Not a single Labour MP among the supposedly “left” Socialist Campaign Group attended the demonstration.

While describing Starmer as a disgrace and complicit with Sunak in Israeli war crimes, German declared that “while the people in Gaza and the people in the West Bank and all the Palestinians are showing tremendous bravery, I wish the same could be said of our politicians. Even the people who say they support Palestine, where are the Labour MPs on this demonstration ... they're not here and that makes it harder for people to demonstrate. So, I would say to Labour MPs, get a backbone and get on the next demonstration.”

During the protest, *World Socialist Web Site* reporters spoke to **Katy**, from Hastings, who said, “I'm here to protest against genocide. I'm here because I don't want a million children to be starved in my name. I don't want a population of 2.3 million to be punished and a genocide to

happen without raising my voice.

“I’m Jewish. I was brought up in the shadow of the Holocaust, and we were told ‘never again’ and that means never again for anyone. The root cause of this is the occupation, is apartheid. We must stop it now.

“I have friends in Gaza right now, who still have their lives, thank God. But many don’t, it’s a terrible situation. They are sheltering in their homes, but they’ve got no food, no water. And every night the bombing comes, children are terrified. Their friends and family are buried under rubble. What we’re witnessing is an atrocity on an unimaginable scale.

“I’m shocked at our media, that we haven’t come out and protested this. I’m shocked at our leaders, so-called leaders. The people have to rise up and speak out and demand a ceasefire, demand humanitarian aid, demand an end to the occupation because nobody’s security is gained through more violence. Nobody is safe so long as the apartheid state still exists.

“Can you imagine, 2.3 million people, they’ve been in a concentration camp for 16 years. Now they’re in an extermination camp. This will be a stain on all of us as human beings unless we do something to stop it.”

Protester **Stan** denounced Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer for supporting Israel’s war on the Palestinians. See below.

Angela, who is retired, said, “I’ve been pro-Palestinian since childhood, seeing these youngsters throwing rocks at IDF [Israel Defense Forces] tanks. I was horrified and I asked my parents what was going on, thinking that World War II had ended all wars and realising that there’s this constant battle going on in Palestine for people to get their land back. They’ve been swept into a concentration camp in Gaza. The average age is extremely young. And for all their years they’ve seen horrific scenes.

“We have an International Criminal Court, but it seems some countries are exempt. They’ll probably deem us all antisemitic because the Zionists portray the situation as if all people that stand up for the Palestinians are antisemitic or anti-Jewish, which is not true. The press put out the same ideas.

“Israel is carrying out war crimes. What is the point of the United Nations, of the International Criminal Court, if their government is not held accountable?

“If the truth comes out and people see the context in which the conflict has arisen then people aren’t going to go around supporting the oppressor. The media want us to support the oppressor and the aggressor every time. A lot of money is made from war and there are people like the US and ourselves who are very much invested in the Israeli state, Israeli intelligence. So obviously they want the UK

population to be flying Israeli flags when they’re war criminals.

“The only way is for the truth to get out, like Julian Assange said, to get through to the population the history, the context of the situation. So that you don’t just believe what the media is coming out with because the media is so controlled now. It doesn’t serve the public interest. It serves foreign policy and the governments decide foreign policy.”

Samal, a mother of two, said, “There are so many children in the hospitals. No one can help them, there is no water, no electricity, no food. They are not allowed to move. No one is allowed to help anyone. We have to stand and watch them die.

“Now they are demanding the Palestinians go to Rafa and Egypt. Why? This is their land and you are killing them. No way! We are not moving, we are not going anywhere. We would rather die in our land.

“Enough is enough. You are calling Hamas killers but Israel’s hands are covered in blood. Little children’s blood.”

Alamandur held up a poster with an excerpt from the WSWs International Editorial Board statement, “US, European powers fully implicated in Israeli mass murder”, which reads, “The only viable perspective is not a ‘mythical two state’ solution but a unified socialist state of Jewish & Arab workers”.

He said, “I’m feeling sad and upset that the killing is not going to change things. We have to join these demonstrations and if large numbers of people do so the government will have to listen. Many people are now talking about this and its changed consciousness.

“Just look what they have done to Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. They have destroyed these countries, to make money out of war. I remember the mass demonstrations against the Iraq war and I know this did not stop the war, but it’s important that we make sure we can change this today.”

Riley said, “I have made this sign saying ‘Peace’ as it is the most important message. Because there is so much money in war the powers that be are not interested in peace and not interested in us, the people. The definitions of things are all dependant on what suits them and their agenda, not the truth. War crimes are things done by others, not by those they support.”



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