

Tens of thousands surround White House in anti-genocide protest

Our reporters
10 June 2024

As many as 75,000 people assembled in Washington D.C. Saturday and set up an enormous circle around the White House, with many dressed in red shirts to form a symbolic “red line” against US government support for the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

There was anger and militancy among the demonstrators, who were overwhelmingly youthful and hostile to the Biden administration, and they came in response to appeals from Palestinian and Jewish student organizations, particularly on college campuses. The Palestinian Youth Movement, Jewish Voice for Peace and National Students for Justice in Palestine were among the sponsors of the event.

Other sponsoring groups included the Council on American-Islamic Relations, CODEPINK and Doctors Against Genocide.

Speaking to NBC News, Nas Issa of the Palestinian Youth Movement said, “The intention is to draw a red line where Biden won’t draw one when it comes to Israel’s genocide in Gaza and say we as the people are drawing the red line today to say enough is enough. ... It’s time for an arms embargo, and it’s time to end this.”

A leader of the George Washington University Students for Justice in Palestine told the *Washington Post* that student actions like the encampment at GWU, closed down by the police last month, “really lit a fire under the Free Palestine movement, because it has pushed the bounds of what we here in the United States and the diaspora are willing to sacrifice.”

Giving her name only as “Aiya” for security reasons, she continued, “We have been out here tirelessly. I mean, how could we tire when we see the people of Gaza endure through literally hell on Earth?”

There was widespread opposition to a vote for Biden in 2024 and zero support for Trump, with many

protesters telling the corporate media they would either not vote in November or cast ballots for third-party or independent candidates.

Speaking to Agence France-Presse, 25-year-old Zaid Mahdawi of Virginia, whose parents are Palestinian, said, “I no longer believe any of the words that Joe Biden says.” He cited Biden’s empty promises about opposing an Israeli assault on Rafah, the last urban area in Gaza. “This ‘red line’ in his rhetoric is rubbish,” Mahdawi said. “It shows his hypocrisy and his cowardice.”

A speaker born in northern Gaza who addressed the rally before the demonstration gave his name only as Mohammad. He said he has aunts and uncles in Rafah, near the tent camp incinerated by an Israeli strike that killed at least 40 people. He recounted a phone call from relatives early in the Israeli war: “They told me, ‘We go to sleep knowing we might not wake up in the morning. The sun rises, and we hope Gaza is still there.’”

But the healthy sentiments of the vast crowd were given no genuine political direction in the empty speeches and sloganeering from the platform, which was dominated by pseudo-left groups like International ANSWER and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). They called for more protests to Congress and the Democratic Party, even though this perspective has been proven completely futile.

The most recent evidence of the bankruptcy of protest politics came in the announcement, only hours before the rally, the congressional Democratic and Republican leaders had set July 24 for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a globally reviled war criminal, to address a Joint Session of Congress.

A team from the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social

Equality (IYSSE) attended the rally and spoke with participants about the genocide in Gaza. They campaigned for the freedom of Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk, jailed by the fascistic Zelensky regime for his opposition to the US-NATO war, as well as urging Virginia residents to sign petitions to place the SEP presidential candidate Joe Kishore on the state's ballot in November.

Liza, who gave her support to the SEP campaign, said:

The official White House reaction to the protest was one of extreme nervousness. There was a pro forma statement endorsing the right to protest, but a Secret Service spokesman said that before the demonstration, "In preparation for the events this weekend in Washington D.C., which have the potential to attract large crowds, additional public safety measures have been put in place near the White House complex."

Despite incessant slanders about violence and antisemitism on the part of anti-genocide protesters, Saturday's protest was entirely peaceful. Neither the Metropolitan Police nor the US Park Police reported any arrests.

But there was an aggressive police response to a Gay Pride group displaying solidarity with the Palestinians. A video of this unprovoked confrontation can be seen [here](#).



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