

Protests spread across the against the U.S.-backed Israel war on Palestine

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Pro-Palestine protests and rallies have spread across the United States in opposition to the Israeli war.

In response to the October 7 Gaza breakout and surprise attacks by Hamas militants in Israel, which resulted in 1,400 deaths, Israel has conducted non-stop self-described “revenge” bombing of Gaza. It has massacred 5,800 people as of October 23 and that is growing by hundreds daily. Nearly half of those slaughtered are children. Gaza City has been largely flattened.

The tightening of the blockade of Gaza by Israel, which will soon result in mass starvation and the shutting down of hospitals resulting in many more deaths, is another target of the protests.

President Joe Biden’s response has been, in his words, “100 percent support to Israel.”

The U.S. was the only country on the United Nations Security Council to vote against a motion calling for a ceasefire, dismissing calls for a ceasefire to allow for humanitarian aid in, telling journalists “We should have those hostages released and then we can talk.”

The blood of Palestinians is now on Biden’s hands.

Jeffrey St Clair, writing in an October 20 article in *CounterPunch*: “Having greenlit Israel’s annihilation of Gaza and then gone to Tel Aviv to sanctify its war crimes, Biden is now, like Macbeth, ‘in blood, stepped in so far, that, should [he] wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o’er.’ ”

Palestinians and progressive Jews are leading mass protests

The breath of the protests is widespread and reminds me of the Black Lives Matter protests against police violence in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The rallies call for solidarity with people living in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. They demand an immediate cease fire, open the borders for unlimited humanitarian aid to be let in, and recognition of Palestine’s right to live and exist.

Here is a selection of a few of the ongoing actions:

In Washington, D.C., 5,000 massed on the National Mall in a “Jews Against Genocide” rally on October 18, organized by two progressive Jewish groups—Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now.

Then almost 500 of their members assembled inside the rotunda of the House Office Building, led by 25 rabbis reading testimonials from Palestinians in Gaza and reciting prayers. Outside, hundreds

more chanted, "Cease-fire now" and sang in Hebrew and English.

The police arrested 300 protesters.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) was formed in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1996. It is the largest pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist Jewish organization in the country. It has helped lead the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement organized by Palestinians to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestine and pressure Israel to comply.

Here are a few examples of other protests from different parts of the country:

In Brooklyn, New York — where there are large Arab and Palestinian as well as Jewish populations — tensions are high.

Pro-Palestinian protests have been the largest and thousands marched in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge neighborhood on October 21. "There was chaos and clashing at nightfall on the streets of Brooklyn as police say more than a dozen people were arrested during a pro-Palestinian demonstration," reported Eyewitness News, Channel.

University students are standing up for Palestine. Not only students but professors have spoken out. Many are facing reprimands from their University presidents.

Some graduating students have lost job offerings from corporations. Employers are applying a new form of McCarthyism to deny any pro-Palestinian views to be expressed while support of Israel is viewed as legitimate.

The University of Arizona president called a statement by Students for Justice in Palestine "antithetical" to school values.

At Columbia University in New York City two groups of hundreds of students tensely faced each other in dueling pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrations, while university officials blocked public access to the campus as a "safety" measure.

Supporters of Palestinian rights, many of whom wore face masks to hide their identities, held signs in a grassy area near a library that read "Free Palestine" and "To Exist is to Resist."

There have been ongoing solidarity rallies for Palestine at both University of California and California State University systems of campuses throughout the state.

San Francisco high school students walked out in support of Palestine on October 19 during the school day. More than 1,500 joined the protest over objections from school officials.

In northern California, thousands rallied in Santa Rosa, with a call for a cease fire. It received front page coverage by the local paper, *The Press Democrat*.

Crowds gathered in various places around Chicago Saturday, October 21, reported CBS News Chicago. The Chicago Coalition for Justice in Palestine held the event— their fifth mass mobilization since the war began.

"When this [the October 7 Hamas attack] happened, it didn't happen from a vacuum," a woman speaker said. "Resistance is allowed when persons are occupied."

Large crowds returned to downtown Raleigh, North Carolina, on October 22 for the second time, in

support of Palestine. For nearly 90 minutes, speakers elicited spirited reactions from the crowd as they denounced Israel's bombing of Gaza, expressed anger over the U.S. government's plan to provide Israel with more than \$14 billion in additional military assistance, and demanded an immediate ceasefire.

Event organizers estimated that 2,000 had gathered for the rally in Moore Square, and a march that followed. People of all ages, including many who came to the rally with their entire families, cheered as speakers led chants of "free, free Palestine" and "long live the Intifada," and called for an end to the bombings of Gaza.

Rallies occurred across the South.

Other clashes between pro-Israel groups and Pro Palestine supporters have occurred. At the Chicago suburb of Skokie, a shot was fired at a pro Palestine gathering. The protest was held as a counter protest to a pro-Israel event

"The melee unfolded when protesters demonstrated outside an event called to show solidarity with Israel at a banquet hall Sunday evening. Protesters as well as a Chicago police officer and a Sun-Times reporter were hit by pepper spray," reported the October 22 *Chicago Sun Times*.

No one was injured by the gunshot. Another protester was struck in a hit and run, police said, but was not seriously injured.

The context is a rise of Islamophobia. A six-year-old Palestinian American Muslim boy was killed a few days earlier on October 16 by a white 71-year-old landlord in another Chicago suburb. His mother was also stabbed some 31 times but survived. The man told his wife the Muslim family was a threat to them.

While the corporate media repeats the State Department and Pentagon's lie that the war is between Israel and Hamas, in fact, it is a US-backed Israel war against the Palestinian people. Stepped up killings and arrests by Israel, already a daily occurrence, are happening in the West Bank.

The Palestinian people are not even considered second-class citizens. Israeli government spokesmen have said they are "not human," and "animals."

The US public is beginning to challenge the big lie of the ruling class. Younger Americans, especially, are becoming more skeptical of unconditional support for Israel.

According to an October 19 *CBS/YouGov* [poll](#) . Over 55 percent of Americans disapprove of Biden's handling of the conflict thus far (though 62 percent of Democrats say Biden is showing the right amount of support for Israel).

Most notably, roughly 53 percent of Democrats believe the government should not send more weapons and supplies to Israel. If the numbers are accurate — and looking into the weeds of the polling data seems to bolster that takeaway — this is a significant shift in public opinion.

Meanwhile, another U.S. poll said 66 percent "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that a cease fire should be the U.S. position. The poll was conducted October 18 and 19 by Data for Progress.

While Washington has always pretended to be a fair player in the Israel and Palestine conflict, Biden has shattered that fake claim. His administration is openly on Israel's side in its destruction of Gaza. He has sent two aircraft carriers to fight for Israel if necessary.

Not only do Arabs see it that way, but so does most of the world cry foul over the hypocrisy of what is called U.S. rules-based democracy.

A senior State Department official, Adam Ramer, [resigned](#) from his position, and the *Huffington Post* is reporting “extremely low morale” “at Foggy Bottom” [a description of the secrecy at the State Department]. A [letter](#) signed by over four hundred Jewish and Muslim staffers on Capitol Hill was released calling for cease-fire.

Some 18 Democratic members of Congress led by the only Palestinian American in Congress, Rashida Tlaib, from Detroit, have loudly spoken out. *Fox News* and the right have called her un-American and supporter of Hamas terrorism.

Tlaib has correctly responded, calling Israel an apartheid state and responsible for the current violence.

It is clear that there is more pushback against a uniformly pro-Israel position than in previous decades.

Across the Middle East the Arab regimes friendly to Israel have been forced to express support for the Palestinian people as the street rises up.

The growing solidarity movement for justice for Palestine is important and can prevent a second *Nakba* (catastrophe).

As the historian Rashid Khalidi writes in the conclusion to his 2020 book, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*: “Overcoming the resistance of those who benefit from the status quo, in order to ensure equal rights for all in this small country between the Jordan River and the sea — this is a test of the political ingenuity of all concerned.”

Standing up to Israel and the United States today is possible and urgent.

Defiance. Resistance.

Malik Miah
