

United States: Movement for Palestine grows

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Palestinian Americans' support for the resistance to Israeli occupation is growing, as support from other groups such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has inspired them to stand up.

Many Jews have joined protests, including supporters of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP). The JVP supports full equality for Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, and is the only major Jewish group to support the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS).



Protest against Israel's bombing of Gaza in Chicago. Photo: @RiseofRadi/Twitter

Voices from marchers

Marches and rallies in solidarity with the Palestinians have taken place across the country. Many marked the 73rd anniversary of Al Nakba (the Catastrophe), when more than 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes during the war that created the state of Israel in 1948.

A rally held in Santa Rosa, California, the heart of the state's wine region, was sponsored by the North Bay Coalition for Palestine.

According to local media, speakers called for justice for the Palestinians.

"We are here because we are human beings who care about the suffering of other people," Therese Mughannam told the Santa Rosa rally. She was born in Jerusalem before the British withdrew from Palestine and the state of Israel was created.

Protesters in many cities showed up with handmade signs. They marched and chanted in solidarity with the Palestinian community.

One protester told CNN: "I definitely feel that the tide is turning in the American public. I feel that we have a lot more support from individuals that are coming out to our protests, that are joining us.

"They have begun to see Palestine and the liberation of Palestinians as another social justice cause that they should be concerned about."

There has been a huge shift in support towards Palestinians on social media in the US.

"I think what's really different this time is that people's communities have grown and expanded and so have our definitions and concepts of liberation," said another protester.

"I just want people to know that Palestinians are human beings just like anyone else in this world and we deserve our right to self-determination."

"The unity we saw, regardless of religion or ethnicity, it speaks volumes for the people in Palestine," protester Adil Abbuthalha told CNN. "They are starting to see their voices being heard, and change is around the corner."

Many Palestinian-Americans participated in the BLM protests last year.

Bella Hadid, a US fashion model with Palestinian heritage, attended a protest in New York City. A caption on one of Hadid's Instagram posts read: "It's free Palestine til Palestine is free!!!"

In Dallas, Texas, thousands turned out. Protester Rehma Mohamed said she had not seen a turnout like this before.

"I've attended every Palestine protest in Dallas, and even during the war in 2014 ... the turnout was only in the hundreds."

At the protest in Chicago, Febi Ramadhan, told CNN: "I was saddened and enraged by these continuous acts of violence, and I participated in the rally in downtown Chicago to fight together with Palestinians against this pogrom until the liberation of Palestine actually happens."

BLM stands with Palestinians

Black Agenda Report columnist Margaret Kimberley wrote in an op-ed: "There aren't many issues which clearly and unequivocally delineate right from wrong.

"The question of justice for the Palestinian people and their right to be protected by international law is one which gives no wriggle room for ifs, ands, or buts.

"Israel's apartheid system is of such long standing and is so brazen that millions of people feel not only outrage but an insult to their own personal integrity and now speak up though they once demurred.

"The state of Israel periodically decides to bomb Gaza, evict Palestinians from their homes, or attack the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

"They have done all of those things in recent weeks, during the holy month of Ramadan and the Eid al-Fitr celebration no less. Israel continues its practice of violating international law by carrying out collective punishments against civilian populations."

BLM local and national groups have joined the pro-Palestinian protests.

African Americans know that the police force was created to control and dominate the Black

population and to protect and serve white people in the US.

They understand that two systems exist in the US — one for whites and one for Blacks.

In Israel, the two-system model is even more brutal. The Israeli state “protects and serves” 9 million, mostly Jewish, people and represses the more than 5 million Palestinians.

There is no pretense of building a unified system of equality. The aim of Israel’s rulers is to drive all Palestinians from what is called Jewish property and land.

The social justice movements in the US, dating back to the 1960s, have supported self-determination for Palestine and seen the Palestinian struggle as part of the international anti-colonial revolution. Palestinians are brothers and sisters in the fight for freedom and equality.

Biden has blood on his hands

US President Joe Biden, like former presidents Donald Trump and Barack Obama, has shown where he stands. He has faced protest and pressure from Palestinian Americans and their allies because of the US government’s total support to the criminal state of Israel.

Biden has pledged to defend Israel’s “right of self-defense” over occupied people, who have no air force and no real military protection from Israeli bombs. It is like saying slaveholders had a “right of self-defense” as they beat and lynch slaves who dared to revolt.

Biden has blood on his hands. He has told Hamas to stand down and refuses to speak to their leaders.

Some in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, led by the only elected Palestinian-American congressperson, Rashida Tlaib, have told the truth about Israel’s oppressive system.

Protests will continue

Young Palestinian Americans have been joined by BLM activists, whites, progressive Jews and other supporters. The example of last year’s mass protests against police violence lives on. The marchers are not looking to or depending on politicians for leadership.

The truth about Israel and US policy is beginning to be told. The big lie of Israel’s “right to self-defense”, as it murders Palestinians in all the territory it occupies, is being exposed. Hamas, a militant group (falsely called terrorist) is seen as a hero to oppressed peoples around the world.

Israel’s settler colonial state is worse than the apartheid system in South Africa. Whites there only wanted Blacks separated into Bantustans.

The Israeli state, with right-wing Jewish groups as its shock troops, seeks to remove and replace Palestinians from all the land it occupies. The eviction of Palestinian homeowners in Jerusalem’s neighbourhoods led to the current resistance and war.

The truth about Israel’s objective — never told by mainstream media — is coming out, little by little, because of the resistance shown by Palestinians and their supporters around the world.

Self-determination can be won, and a secular democratic state created.

Malik Miah, California

P.S.

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<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/united-states-movement-palestine-grows>