# London march draws record 500,000 in growing UK solidarity with Palestine



On a vibrant Saturday in central London, the streets were transformed into a sea of solidarity as over 500,000 individuals marched in support of Palestine. This demonstration, marking the 27th national rally since the onset of intensified conflict in October 2023, stands as a testament to the enduring strength and expansion of the Palestine movement in the UK. Protesters filled iconic locations such as Downing Street and Westminster Bridge, their chants echoing a collective call for justice against what many have termed a genocide.

This latest mobilization reflects a growing trend within the movement: according to a mass survey conducted by Socialist Worker, approximately one in eight participants were attending their first national demonstration. First-time marcher Doaa articulated a sentiment echoed by many, noting, "They’re trying to silence us, but they can’t take away our voices." Her words underscored the determination of demonstrators to resist not only the violence faced by Palestinians but also the broader implications of Western foreign policy.

The timing of the march was significant—it coincided with the 77th anniversary of the Nakba, a day of remembrance for the displacement of over 800,000 Palestinians following the founding of Israel in 1948. This historical context fuels a sense of urgency among participants. Jamilla, another marcher, expressed the necessity of acknowledging that the current crisis did not emerge suddenly on October 7, 2023, but is rooted in decades of oppression.

The march served as a platform for voices from diverse backgrounds, including Holocaust survivor Stephen Kapos, who articulated his dismay at the government’s attempts to suppress public dissent. “Their only response is to slander and abuse these marches—but they aren’t succeeding,” he asserted, highlighting a common frustration among protesters towards the state’s narrative surrounding the movement.

A palpable anger was directed towards Labour leader Keir Starmer, whom demonstrators accused of betraying human rights principles. As Iqbal pointed out, “Starmer’s a human rights lawyer. Tell me, where’s the humanity in blowing people up?” This sentiment was echoed across the crowd, with many lambasting mainstream media coverage as biased in favour of Israel. Julia from Barking articulated how the rhetoric from Labour politicians resonated with that of far-right parties, saying, “To see Starmer and Labour politicians say that is disgusting and won’t be tolerated—we will stop it.”

Union representation was also notable at the march, with banners from several organisations prominently displayed. Gary, a member of the Coventry and Northamptonshire branch of the CWU union, stated, “Trade unions should be on the side of the oppressed—and I can think of no better example of modern oppression than the horrific genocide in Gaza.” Such solidarity illustrates a growing intersectionality within the movement, drawing links between various struggles for justice.

Despite the government's efforts to curtail the Palestine movement, protesters remain resolute. Activists such as Ewan from the NEU emphasised the need for union leadership to translate public statements into action, advocating for more disruptive forms of protest. They argue that as long as arms are being sent to Israel, British complicity in the violence against Palestinians will continue.

As demonstrators filled Whitehall, left-wing MP Apsana Begum delivered a poignant address, reflecting on the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza. “Starvation is being deployed as a weapon of war. 2.3 million Palestinians are being denied food and medical aid,” she highlighted, reinforcing the urgency for immediate action.

Historian William Dalrymple also spoke to the crowd, weaving historical context into contemporary demands. He drew attention to the long-standing suffering of Palestinians, remarking, “For 77 years, Palestinians have been terrorised into leaving their homes and farms.” His reflections resonated with many, as the movement seeks to reclaim narratives often sidelined by mainstream discourse.

Amidst the palpable anger and frustration, there remains a spark of hope among the demonstrators. For them, protests signify not only an assertion of solidarity with Palestinians but also a broader push against systemic injustices. As Shama articulated, calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) remain paramount, alongside a recognition of interconnected struggles, including those for LGBTQ+ rights.

The sheer scale of the demonstration reflects a growing discontent with the status quo, particularly as divisions within political establishments, such as the one illustrated by the Financial Times, reveal cracks in the facade of governmental unity on foreign policy. The editorial posited that “the longer it goes on, the more those who remain silent or cowed from speaking out will be complicit,” signalling a profound reckoning with the West's response to the ongoing crisis.

As the demonstration concluded, there was a palpable sense that this was not merely another protest but part of a larger struggle for justice, echoing across generations and transcending borders. For the participants, the fight for a free Palestine continues, and their voices, far from being silenced, are growing louder and more unified.

**Reference Map**

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12
2. Paragraphs 1, 4, 6
3. Paragraph 3
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 7
7. Paragraph 8
8. Paragraphs 9, 10
9. Paragraphs 12, 13
10. Paragraph 14

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://socialistworker.co.uk/news/over-500000-turn-central-london-into-sea-of-solidarity-with-palestine/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/11/thousands-join-pro-palestine-march-in-london> - On November 11, 2023, hundreds of thousands marched in central London to demand a ceasefire in Gaza. Police estimated about 300,000 demonstrators participated, marking it as the largest Palestine solidarity demonstration in the UK at that time. The march coincided with Armistice Day commemorations, leading to political debates over its timing. Protesters chanted slogans like 'Stop bombing Gaza' and 'Ceasefire now', sending a strong message to the British government, which had attempted to ban the march.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/09/tens-of-thousands-of-pro-palestine-protesters-march-through-london> - On March 9, 2024, tens of thousands participated in a pro-Palestine march in London, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The demonstration began at Hyde Park Corner and ended outside the US embassy in Nine Elms. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign estimated about 400,000 attendees, though the Metropolitan Police had yet to release their count. The march was the first national demonstration since Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's comments linking pro-Palestine protests to 'extremism'.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/31/four-arrested-as-200000-attend-pro-palestine-march-in-london> - On March 30, 2024, over 200,000 people attended a pro-Palestine march in London, demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The demonstration featured speeches from former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and actor Khalid Abdalla. The Metropolitan Police made four arrests, including one on suspicion of a terrorism-related offence. Corbyn criticized the UK government's continued arms trade with Israel, highlighting the destruction in Gaza.
5. <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1654765> - On November 11, 2023, London witnessed its largest pro-Palestinian demonstration, with over one million protesters flooding the streets. The march was a show of solidarity with Palestine, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Protesters have been taking to the streets each week since October 7, against Israel's actions in Gaza. Despite escalating repression and anti-Palestinian stances from British officials, UK citizens continue to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.
6. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/hundreds-of-thousands-attend-7th-national-march-for-palestine-in-london/3108168> - On January 13, 2024, hundreds of thousands attended the seventh national march for Palestine in London. Organized by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the demonstration was part of a global day of action, mobilizing for a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza across 60 cities in over 30 countries. The march began at Bank Junction and proceeded to Parliament Square, where speeches were delivered.
7. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/01/14/fvjj-j14.html> - On January 13, 2024, at least 500,000 people demonstrated in London during the National March for Palestine—Ceasefire Now rally. The march was an outpouring of opposition to Israel’s actions in Gaza and Britain’s involvement in the bombing of Yemen. The event was part of a global protest, with demonstrations held in over 120 cities in 45 countries. Protesters chanted against 'Genocide Joe' Biden and 'Bloody Blinken', the US Secretary of State.