# Tens of thousands rally in London as pro-Palestinian protests surge on conflict anniversary



Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in central London on multiple occasions, fiercely advocating for an end to the escalating conflict in the Middle East and highlighting the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Most recently, on 5 October 2024, tens of thousands marched from Russell Square towards Whitehall, marking the anniversary of the 7 October 2023 attacks in Israel. The protest was organised by groups including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), with participants traveling from across the UK to join the largely peaceful demonstration. Police reported 17 arrests during the event, which stood out with a turnout higher than some recent protests of this nature. The demonstration culminated in speeches outside Downing Street, underscoring calls for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence in the region.

The pro-Palestinian activism in London has been consistent since the conflict erupted in October 2023, with the PSC playing a prominent role. On 21 October 2023, around 100,000 people marched through central London, beginning at Marble Arch and proceeding to Whitehall. This event, one of the largest UK protests in recent years, was also described by the Metropolitan Police as peaceful despite some arrests related to minor public order offences and fireworks. The march coincided with a limited opening of the Rafah border crossing, intended to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, though global organisations stressed that much more assistance was urgently needed. Similar large-scale protests occurred worldwide, reflecting widespread international concern—demonstrators called for an end to Israel’s bombardment of Gaza and voiced their opposition with chants such as "Stop bombing Gaza" and "Free Palestine."

The broader conflict intensifying these protests began when Hamas militants attacked Israel on 7 October 2023, resulting in the death of over 1,200 people and many hostages being taken. Israel's military response has resulted in devastating casualties in Gaza, with nearly 55,600 Palestinians killed and millions displaced according to Gaza’s health ministry. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated rapidly, creating a hunger crisis among the population. These developments have fuelled escalating tensions and violence internationally, including an increase in antisemitic and anti-Muslim offences, underscoring the deep-seated divisions the conflict has ignited globally.

Meanwhile, political efforts to de-escalate the crisis continue amidst these public demonstrations. British Foreign Secretary David Lammy recently described the Middle East situation as "perilous," urging Iran to enter negotiations with the US. He met with Iran’s foreign minister Abbas Araghchi in Geneva alongside French and German counterparts, discussing nuclear concerns and regional stability. While Lammy emphasized a critical window for diplomacy, Araghchi insisted Iran would not negotiate under ongoing Israeli airstrikes, underscoring the complexity of the conflict’s political dimensions. At the same time, US President Donald Trump delayed a decision on joining Israeli strikes against Iran, with exchanges of fire continuing in the region.

In London, the protests have sometimes featured tense encounters with counter-demonstrators. For instance, on a recent Saturday, pro-Palestinian demonstrators chanting slogans such as "Free, free Palestine" passed near groups organised by the pro-Israeli campaign Stop The Hate, leading to confrontations. Police intervened when a bottle was thrown at the counter-protesters. Despite these moments, the demonstrations remained predominantly peaceful, reflecting strong public sentiment over the conflict and its humanitarian consequences.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign remains at the forefront of UK activism on this issue, persistently calling for justice, peace, and an end to human rights abuses connected to the Israeli occupation and the war in Gaza. Their campaigns have mobilised tens of thousands of people in London and beyond, making them a significant voice in the ongoing discourse on Middle East peace and UK foreign policy.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-gaza-israel-protest-whitehall-london-b2774424.html), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce3wzpjj770o), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/05/tens-of-thousands-join-pro-palestinian-protest-in-london)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/21/about-100000-turn-out-in-london-for-pro-palestine-rally), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/8f6728e4d15391f9a478d4bef38ec52c), [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Solidarity_Campaign)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-gaza-israel-protest-whitehall-london-b2774424.html), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/8f6728e4d15391f9a478d4bef38ec52c), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_war_protests_in_the_United_Kingdom)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-gaza-israel-protest-whitehall-london-b2774424.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-gaza-israel-protest-whitehall-london-b2774424.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Solidarity_Campaign)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-gaza-israel-protest-whitehall-london-b2774424.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/21/about-100000-turn-out-in-london-for-pro-palestine-rally> - On 21 October 2023, approximately 100,000 pro-Palestinian protesters marched through central London, starting at Marble Arch and proceeding to Whitehall. The demonstration was organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and other groups, with participants holding signs such as 'Freedom for Palestine' and 'Stop bombing Gaza'. The Metropolitan Police estimated the crowd size at around 100,000 by 2pm. The protest was largely peaceful, with ten arrests made for offences including fireworks, public order, and assaulting an emergency service worker. The event coincided with the opening of the Rafah border crossing, allowing limited humanitarian aid into Gaza. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, stated that 'much, much more' aid is needed. The protest highlighted the growing public concern over the conflict in Gaza and the humanitarian situation.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/8f6728e4d15391f9a478d4bef38ec52c> - On 21 October 2023, tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched through London, calling for an end to Israel's bombardment of Gaza. The protest began at Marble Arch and proceeded to Whitehall, with police estimating the crowd at up to 100,000. Participants waved Palestinian flags and chanted slogans such as 'Stop bombing Gaza'. Similar protests occurred globally, including in Belfast, Dublin, Paris, Düsseldorf, Rome, Barcelona, and Sydney. The conflict, now in its third week, has resulted in thousands of deaths in Gaza and Israel, displacing over a million people in Gaza. The situation has heightened global tensions, leading to increased antisemitic and anti-Muslim offenses. Protests have varied in legality, with some resulting in clashes or being banned due to fears of violence and hate speech. Pro-Israel demonstrations have also taken place, focusing on the return of hostages captured by Hamas. The crisis continues to ignite strong reactions worldwide, reflecting deep divisions and calls for ceasefires and humanitarian intervention.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce3wzpjj770o> - On 5 October 2024, tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters marched through central London, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and an end to the escalating conflict in the Middle East. The demonstration began at Russell Square and proceeded to Whitehall, where speeches were held outside Downing Street. The event was organised by groups including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, with participants travelling from around the country to take part. The Metropolitan Police reported 17 arrests during the largely peaceful protest, which marked one year since the 7 October attacks in Israel. The police noted that the turnout appeared greater than other recent protests.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/05/tens-of-thousands-join-pro-palestinian-protest-in-london> - On 5 October 2024, tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in central London to mark the passing of a year since the 7 October attacks in Israel. Activists convened in Russell Square and Bedford Square, with plans to march to Whitehall, where speeches were to be delivered, including one from former Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf. The protest was organised by groups including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, with participants travelling from around the country to take part. The Metropolitan Police reported 17 arrests during the largely peaceful protest, which marked one year since the 7 October attacks in Israel. The police noted that the turnout appeared greater than other recent protests.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Solidarity_Campaign> - The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) is a UK-based organisation that advocates for Palestinian rights and an end to the Israeli occupation. In October 2023, the PSC was the main organiser of a series of demonstrations, including a significant march on 21 October in London, which attracted approximately 100,000 participants. The PSC has been actively involved in organising protests and vigils in response to the Gaza war, calling for an immediate ceasefire and highlighting human rights abuses. The organisation continues to campaign for justice and peace in the region, engaging in various activities to raise awareness and mobilise support for Palestinian rights.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_war_protests_in_the_United_Kingdom> - The Gaza war protests in the United Kingdom refer to a series of demonstrations and rallies that took place in response to the Gaza war, particularly in October 2023. On 21 October 2023, between 50,000 and 60,000 people joined a march in London to protest against a rise in hate crimes against Jews since the attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. The protests were organised by various groups, including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Friends of Al-Aqsa, and were characterised by calls for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence. The demonstrations also highlighted concerns over human rights abuses and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.