

*Protesters block traffic in front of
U.S. congressional member's
home, demanding ceasefire*

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Chicago, November 10 (RHC)-- Members of the Chicago chapter of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) and other constituents of Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky blocked traffic in front of Schakowsky's home in Evanston, Illinois, calling for a ceasefire.

Dozens of protesters risked arrest as they demanded that Schakowsky sign Cori Bush's House Resolution 786, which calls for an immediate deescalation and ceasefire in Israel and occupied Palestine. Activists with USPCN shut down Schakowsky's office with a sit-in two weeks ago, resulting in the arrest of seven protesters. Schakowsky recently announced by email to constituents that her office would remain closed.

In Gaza, at least 10,569 people have been killed by the Israeli military since October 7, when Israel commenced its campaign of collective punishment against Palestinian civilians in response to a surprise attack by Hamas in which 1,400 Israelis were killed.

Of the Palestinians whom the Israeli military has killed, 4,324 have been children. An estimated 26,475 people in Gaza have been wounded, and access to medical care has been severely compromised. Israeli airstrikes have struck multiple hospitals and the Israeli siege of Gaza has deprived medical personnel of fuel, water, food and medication, including anesthesia. At least 2,550 people are missing in Gaza, including 1,350 children. Most of the missing are believed to be buried under the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli airstrikes.

The street blockade in front of Schakowsky's home follows a historic march in Washington, D.C., in which an estimated 300,000 people marched to the White House, demanding an end to the genocide being waged by Israel and funded in part by the U.S. government.

"Schakowsky is complicit in Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people because she won't demand that it stop the killing," USPCN-Chicago co-chair Nazek Sankari said in a statement. "At this point, there is no more talking. Our demand is clear." Sankari emphasized: "We have already forced her to shutter her office, and we'll continue to say: 'No business as usual for those who won't speak out against Israel.'"

"Schakowsky is calling for a humanitarian pause, but what we need and demand is an end to Israel's genocidal bombing, assault and siege," protester Emma Rubin told Truthout. "As a Jewish person and constituent, I know that 'never again' must mean 'never again for anyone.'" Rubin roundly rejected talk of a "humanitarian pause," saying, "Half measures and euphemisms at this point are complicity in Israel's ongoing war crimes. If she won't stand up, we will. Unlike Schakowsky, we will not be silent as Gaza's children scream."

Community groups who helped organize the shutdown, under the leadership of USPCN, included the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Black Lives Matter-Chicago and a worker-led mental health collective called Rayo Counseling and Community Co-op. In a statement, the coalition demanded that Schakowsky call for an end to all U.S. aid to Israel, and that Schakowsky drop all charges against the seven protesters who shut down her office two weeks ago.

The protesters remained in the street for three hours on Tuesday, chanting and rallying, as police looked on. Some protesters speculated that the police may have had orders to avoid making arrests, so as not to vilify Schakowsky or create a larger news story. But even without arrests, the protesters caused a major traffic disruption, interrupting "business as usual," while delivering their message to Schakowsky's door.

Protesters led by the U.S. Palestinian Community Network shut down Ridge Avenue, in Evanston, Illinois, near the home of U.S. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky. Protest marshals unfurl orange plastic fencing in front of the assembled protesters to redirect traffic as the protest begins.

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