

Hundreds of thousands around the world protest Israel's war of aggression against Gaza as first anniversary nears



Rome, October 6 (RHC)-- Italian police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse violent demonstrators in Rome as hundreds of thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters took to the streets in major European cities and around the globe on Saturday to call for a cease-fire as the first anniversary of

the Hamas attacks on Israel approached.

Huge rallies were held in several European cities, with gatherings expected to continue over the weekend and peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary.

In Rome, several thousand demonstrated peacefully Saturday afternoon until a smaller group tried to push the rally toward the center of the city, in spite of a ban by local authorities who refused to authorize protests, citing security concerns. Some protesters, dressed in black and with their faces covered threw stones, bottles and paper bombs at the police, who responded with tear gas and water cannons, eventually dispersing the crowd. At least 30 law enforcement officers and three demonstrators were injured in the clashes, local media reported.

The rally in Rome had been calm earlier, with people chanting "Free Palestine, Free Lebanon," waving Palestinian flags and holding banners calling for an immediate stop to the conflict.

In London, thousands marched through the capital to Downing Street amid a heavy police presence. The atmosphere was tense as pro-Palestinian protesters and counterdemonstrators, some holding Israeli flags, passed one another. Scuffles broke out as police officers pushed back activists trying to get past a cordon. At least 17 people were arrested on suspicion of public order offenses, supporting a proscribed organization and assault, London's Metropolitan Police said.

In the northern German city of Hamburg, about 950 people staged a peaceful demonstration with many waving Palestinian and Lebanese flags or chanting "Stop the Genocide," the DPA news agency reported, citing a count by police. Two smaller pro-Israeli counterdemonstrations took place without incident, it said.

Several thousand protesters gathered peacefully at Paris' Republique Plaza in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese people. Many were waving Palestinian flags while holding posters reading "Stop the genocide," "Free Palestine," and "Hands off Lebanon."

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators also gathered at New York's Times Square to call for a cease-fire, chanting "Gaza!" to a drumbeat. Some wore keffiyeh scarfs, waved Palestinian and Lebanese flags and held a large cardboard image of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with red paint symbolizing blood across his face.

Rallies were also planned in several other cities in the United States as well as in other parts of the world, including Denmark, Switzerland, South Africa and India. In the Philippines, dozens of left-wing activists protested near the U.S. Embassy in Manila, where police prevented them from getting closer to the seaside compound.

In Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters marched to the heavily guarded U.S. Embassy on Sunday. Authorities blocked roads leading to the embassy with razor wire and concrete barriers as more than 1,000 police were deployed around the compound.

Pro-Israeli demonstrations are expected to be held Sunday because Jews across the world are still observing Rosh Hashana, or the Jewish new year. This year, emotions will be high for many given that the midpoint of the 10 days spanning Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is Oct. 7th — the one-year anniversary of the Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis and provided an excuse for Israel to brutally carry out its long-time plans of ethnic cleansing.

Security forces in several countries warned of heightened levels of alert in major cities, amid concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could inspire new terror attacks in Europe or that the protests could turn violent.

Pro-Palestinian protests calling for an immediate cease-fire have repeatedly taken place across Europe and around the globe in the past year and have often turned violent, with confrontations between demonstrators and law enforcement officers.

Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Britain, said he and others will keep organizing marches until action against Israel is taken. “We need to be out on the streets in even bigger numbers to stop this carnage and stop Britain being drawn into it,” Jamal said.

In Berlin, a march is scheduled from the Brandenburg Gate to Bebelplatz on Sunday. Local media reported that security forces have warned of potential overload because of the scale of protests. German authorities pointed to increasing antisemitic and violent incidents in recent days.

Earlier this week in France, Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau warned the country’s regional prefects, expressing concern about possible tensions and saying that the terrorist threat was high.

In the U.S. capital of Washington, DC, more than 3,000 people demonstrated within sight of the White House. Amid a heavy police presence, the protesters gathered at Lafayette Park, the same site as 2020 protests against police brutality and the killing of George Floyd. “Resistance is justified when people are occupied!” they chanted.

One speaker on stage called October 7, 2023, “the day that Gazans finally broke out of their prison.”

The crowds then marched through downtown, with police closing streets ahead of them. Protesters carried signs criticizing the Biden-Harris administration’s handling of the issue. One read: “Abandon Harris ’24.”

Law student Annette Tunstall said she considered voting Democratic after Biden stepped down and Harris became the candidate. But she lost faith after pro-Palestinian voices were muzzled at the Democratic National Convention, she said. “I really wanted to feel like I could vote for her in good conscience,” Tunstall said. “I don’t think it would have taken a lot for thousands of pro-Palestinian people to hold their nose and vote for Harris.”

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/366839-hundreds-of-thousands-around-the-world-protest-israels-war-of-aggression-against-gaza-as-first-anniversary-nears>



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