

Protesters shut down UK arms factories over Gaza war complicity

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Workers for a Free Palestine swarm an arms factory in Rochester, Kent. (file photo)

London, March 21 (RHC)-- In a display of solidarity with Palestinians, hundreds of workers and protesters have shut down arms factories across England and Scotland to condemn the UK's complicity in the Israeli regime's war of aggression in Gaza.

The factories, which produce components for F-35 fighter jets, are accused of shoring up the Israeli regime's military offensive in Gaza.

Under the banner "Workers for a Free Palestine," a diverse coalition of individuals from various unions and sectors including health, education, hospitality, academia, and the arts, launched the protests on Wednesday. Activists aimed to disrupt the supply chain of arms to Israel and denounce the UK's complicity in the ongoing genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza.

GE Aviation Systems in Cheltenham and Leonardo UK in Edinburgh were among the targeted sites where components for the F-35 jets are manufactured.

The protesters vowed to continue their protest actions for a month, demanding an immediate cessation of arms sales to Israel and advocating for a permanent ceasefire. The decision to blockade the arms factories was prompted by Israel's impending invasion of Rafah, which the United Nations and other international organizations have warned would have catastrophic consequences for Gaza's population.

Unionists have called on workers across the UK to challenge their government's military support for the Israeli regime. "We're demanding our government immediately halt arms supplies to Israel before it launches this offensive in Rafah using British-made bombs. But we are not waiting for this genocide-appeasing prime minister to act," Zad, a union member, said in a press release.

A campaign in the UK has been initiated to stop paying tax over complicity in Israel's genocide in Gaza. In December, similar blockades targeted four other arms factories across the UK. Despite assurances from the UK government that it hasn't supplied lethal military equipment to Israel since October, evidence suggests otherwise.

Affidavits filed at the High Court revealed ongoing export licenses and pending applications for equipment likely to be used in offensive operations in Gaza.

Furthermore, the UK Ministry of Defence disclosed that Israeli warplanes have been permitted to take off from and land in the UK during the Gaza war, raising concerns about Britain's involvement in facilitating Israeli atrocities.

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