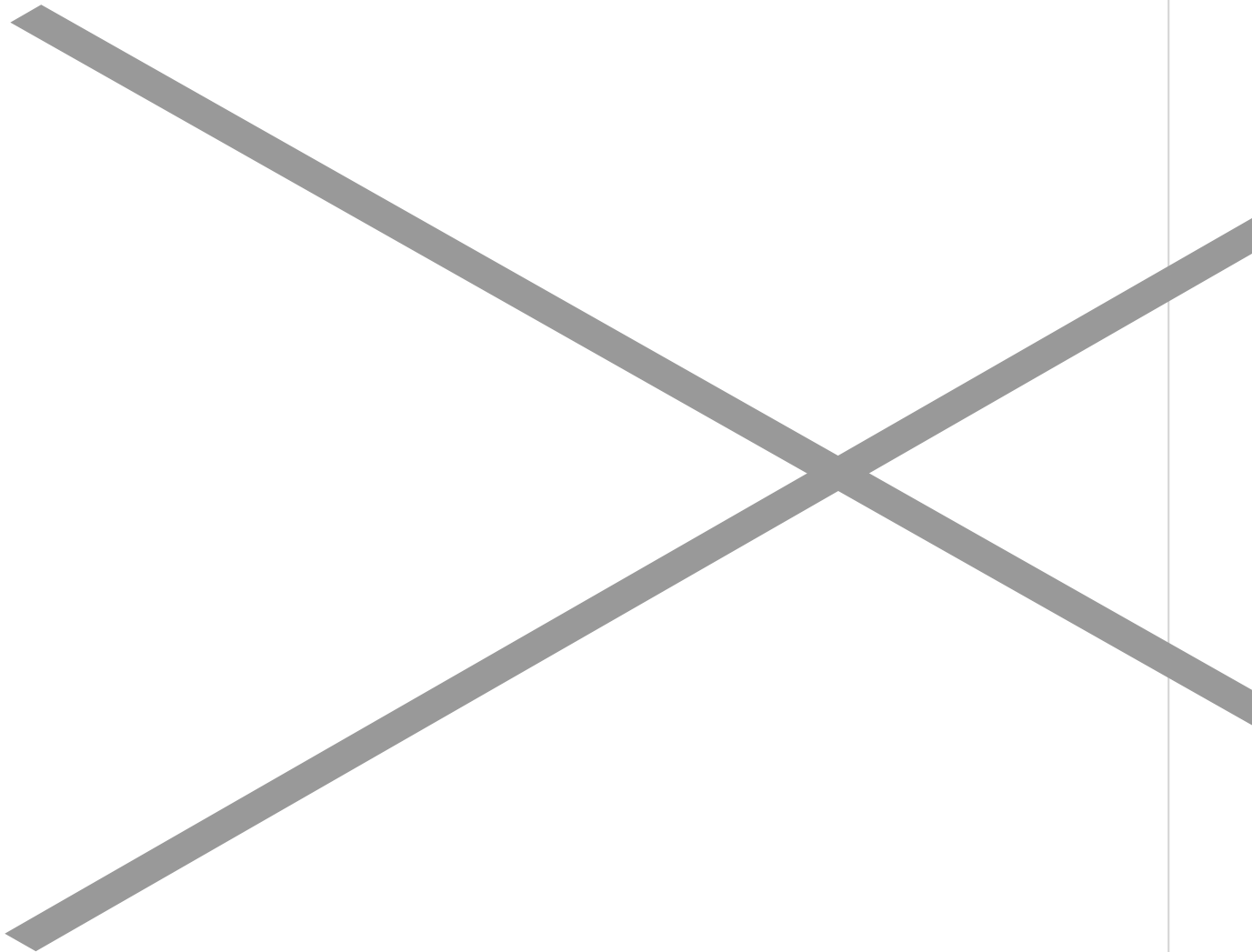


Unity through resistance: 3,000 activists converge in Detroit for People's Conference for Palestine

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Yara Shoufani delivers keynote speech at first day of People's Conference for Palestine (Photo: Zoe Alexandra)

By Peoples Dispatch

Detroit, May 25 (RHC / People's Dispatch) -- With 3,000 people and hundreds of pro-Palestine organizations converging in a metropolitan area with the largest concentration of Arab Americans, amidst the largest movement for Palestine in US history, the People's Conference for Palestine feels nothing short of historic.

"Eternal glory to our martyrs, speedy recovery to our wounded, and freedom for our steadfast prisoners," Mohammed Nabulsi, leader in the Palestinian Youth Movement in Houston, Texas, opened the conference with these explicitly revolutionary invocations on the first day on Friday, May 24. "In the last eight months, we, the Palestinian people, have demonstrated to the entire world, that the only way we can author our own history, and transform our present reality, is the path of unity through resistance."

Nabulsi, in his capacity as an organizer, is invoking the global nature of the Palestine solidarity movement, which extends far beyond the Arab diaspora of the world and has in fact touched the hearts and minds of every person who stands against the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The Palestinian Youth Movement has been at the forefront of the Palestine solidarity struggle across North America, alongside key conveners of the conference, which include National Students for Justice in Palestine, the ANSWER Coalition, Healthcare Workers for Palestine, among others. This is a movement that has ignited the consciousness of millions across the continent, moving hundreds of thousands to cast protest votes against an incumbent president who they voted into office, moving students to set up Gaza Solidarity Encampments that bring them in direct confrontation with police and violent Zionists, and moving all major cities across North America in mass mobilization after mass mobilization.

"Gaza has ushered us into a new era: an era where Palestine has become unavoidable," said Yara Shoufani, a leader in the Palestinian Youth Movement in Toronto, Canada, said during the opening keynote of the conference. "Gaza stands at the center of the world: waging a heroic battle not only against the Zionist enemy and its backers, but in service of world revolution."

On the first day, conference attendees heard from key figures of the global Palestinian movement, including British-Palestinian surgeon Ghassan Abu-Sittah, who worked as a doctor at the Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza in the early weeks of the genocide. He provided a first-hand account of the horrors of Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, as well as dispatches he had received from medical workers on the ground in Rafah, where Israel is waging a brutal offensive.

"The wounded are so malnourished when they are wounded, that their wounds cannot heal," Abu-Sittah described. "As a killing machine, malnutrition and the manufactured famine is not just taking the lives of children, but also taking the lives of the wounded, whose bodies are no longer able to heal from their wounds and from the surgeries," Abu-Sittah described.

Mustafa Barghouti, physician, secretary general and co-founder of the Palestinian National Initiative, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), and president of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, also spoke at the opening of the conference, at the plenary entitled, "The War on Palestine".

"And during the last seven, eight months, Israel committed terrible crimes. Up to now, we've lost 45,000 Palestinians, if we count the 10,000 people under the rubble," Barghouti outlined. "If this had happened in the United States of America, you would be talking about 18 million people killed or injured in less than

eight months. And these are not just numbers. Each one of the 125,000 Palestinians killed and injured, each one is a person, a family, a history, a dream.”

But Barghouti also reflected a level of revolutionary optimism that is present in the global movement for Palestine. “Today, the roads are open for reunifying all the efforts of all Palestinian people, whether they live in 1948 areas, whether they live in the occupied territories in West Bank and Gaza and Jerusalem, or whether they live like you do in the diaspora,” he said. “Our future is one and our struggle is one, and we have to all be unified.”

The conference continues until the final day on Sunday, May 26th. On the second day, May 25, the conference opened with a plenary on “Palestinian resistance and the path to liberation,” and also featured plenaries on “The movement for Palestine in North America” and “Zionism and U.S. imperialism.” The day ends with a cultural performance by Palestinian vocalist Sanaa Moussa.

Source: <https://peoplesdispatch.org/>

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