

RN Speech on behalf of STSWC November 4 2023 Demonstration and Rally at Town Hall Steps, South Shields.

Thanks very much. A very inspiring rally. Silence is indeed Shame and it is something that the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition has been aware of since we were formed in 2003 to oppose the mass killings of the Iraqi people, their children as well as in Afghanistan. So I would like to congratulate the community in South Tyneside for organising this demonstration and rally and the organisation of it by the *Palestinian Peace Pursuers*. Like hundreds of thousands of people in ongoing rallies across the country today we are once again condemning the Israeli crimes in Bombing Gaza and the killing of over 9,000 people, as we have heard today, with over half of them women and children.

Over the last days the Israelis have cause horrific massacres bombing the refugee camps Shati, Nuseirat and they bombed Jabailia twice killing whole families and hundreds of people. Then the Israeli bombing has demolished Gaza city, Palestinian homes, hospitals, schools and Mosques turning Gaza into rubble.

Like you like the whole world is calling for an immediate ceasefire to end the killing and we stand with the Palestinians. We stand with the Palestinian peoples resistance to these crimes against humanity carried out by Israel and their backers in US, Britain and in the west.

I think the first thing to say is that don't be fooled, as you won't be, by the western propaganda that the US is trying to help rein in Israel. It is the White House and the Pentagon that is now directing this genocidal war in Gaza with the British government at their side.

The information is out there that not only are US troops involved in the siege of Gaza but there are even also reports say British special services may be involved helping the IDF invade Gaza. And further proof of that can be seen when you look at the UN where Britain backs the US in vetoing any ceasefire in Palestine when the vast majority of the worlds countries and peoples condemn it and demand an immediate ceasefire.

Sunak and Starmer justify this by claiming that Israel has a right to self-defence.

It is not self defence for Israel to subject Palestinians to collective punishment as used by the nazis and was condemned by Nurembourg trials and by the

United Nations.

Is it not self defence to drop 1000s of bombs on a besieged Gaza; to deny food, water, fuel, and electricity to a people with no means of escape, to cut off internet and phone lines; to continue to violate international human rights and commit war crimes with impunity;

So it is complicit in war crimes for Sunak and Starmer to not even use their influence to call for a cease-fire and in fact Britain is one of the very few countries to shamefully vote against a cessation of hostilities at the UN.

They have blood on their hands. Even UN human rights experts call it 'genocide'. It is the people who have demonstrated that they are determined to speak in their own name, including many Jewish people, some of whom are here today, declaring "NO NOT IN OUR NAME".

Our government is providing Israel with military, diplomatic, and political support.

Many of you will know that for Britain this is nothing new. We have a special responsibility in Britain for depriving the Palestinians of their homeland. November 2 was the 106th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

Once Britain's Prime Minister, then the Foreign Secretary from late 1916, Balfour pledged Palestinian homeland to another people. That promise was made on November 2, 1917, on behalf of the British government in the form of a letter sent to the leader of the Zionists in Britain, Walter Rothschild.

At the time, Britain was not even in control of Palestine, which was still part of the Ottoman Empire which Britain was aiming to destroy in WWI and ironically was inciting the Arabs to help them accomplish this. Either way, the Palestinian homeland was never Balfour's to so casually transfer to anyone else. That was Palestinian land. Britain destroyed the Palestinian homeland. The Balfour Declaration, paved the way for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Nakba – the catastrophe – colonisation and ethnic cleansing - over 750,000 Palestinians driven into exile - their villages destroyed.

Today the US and Britain have ignored Israel's illegal siege of Gaza and its decades of killing and displacement of Palestinians, in Israel's violent colonial expansion.

Palestinians have a right to resist and demand justice. International law states,

all peoples faced with illegal occupation have a right to self-defence.

As Israel begins its new phase of extermination of the Gazan population we shout once again NOT IN OUR NAME. Our hearts go out to Palestinians crying out for justice. Let us together build the movement against the war on Gaza and the Palestinian people all over Palestine in the West bank as well aim this opposition against the British government's support for these Israeli crimes.

End Britain's role in supporting the genocide of Palestinians. End the attack on Gaza and the Palestinians. Support a free Palestine. Join the massive demonstration next week when we all gather again to oppose this. Free Palestine.

Free Free Palestine