

# FRESNO REACTS TO GAZA

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Fresno residents have been protesting in response to the war between Israel and Hamas and the growing violence against Palestinians in Gaza.

The purpose of these protests is to bring awareness to what is going on and to hold the U.S. government accountable for its involvement in the conflict.

Protests in support of Palestine were held on Oct. 14 and 17. The most recent took place on Oct. 21 near Riverpark Shopping Center on Nees and Blackstone in Fresno.

“I feel like it’s about time, I feel like this is the least everybody can do,” protester Yusuf Robinson said.

Reza Nekumanesh, a local Muslim leader, has been in Fresno for 28 years protesting the oppression of Palestinian people.

“The craziest part and the reason we are on the streets is because these are with weapons made in the U.S. These are with weapons supplied by the U.S, and these are attacks being done with the funding of the United States so we have a direct link to those mur-

ders,” Nekumanesh said. “We are directly connected to the slaughter, genocide, mass excavation of a people.”

As of Oct. 23, the war’s death toll is estimated at more than 5,000 Palestinians and 14,000 Israelis, according to live updates from AP News.

Nekumanesh encourages people to support organizations like Islamic Relief. Individuals can also show support by reaching out to elected officials and national leaders to address concerns or issues they might have.

“To demand not to ask, to demand that the blockade of aid be lifted, that aid be let into Gaza, and that there be a cease-fire, and we hold the state of Israel accountable for the crimes,” Nekumanesh said.

Nekumanesh said that students often do not appreciate their position to effect change.

“Students are at an institution where there is free thought and free discussion and it is a place where students can gather and have those hard conversations whether it be with fellow students, professors, or administrators, and make them



Protestors gathered across all corners the intersection of Blackstone and Nees Ave organized by Free Palestine on Oct. 17, 2023. Photo/Jesus Herrera

aware of Palestinian people and all oppressed people around the world.”

State Center Community College District Chancellor Carole Goldsmith sent a message to students and staff on Oct. 9, days after the surprise attack against Israel by Hamas.

In the message, Goldsmith acknowledged that many students, faculty and staff have familial and cultural ties to the region. She called on the campus community to have grace and understanding for those who are experiencing heightened emotions in response to the attacks.

“In times of global uncertainty, it is vital that we come together as a community to support one another. Your understanding and empathy can make a significant difference during these challenging times,” Goldsmith said in the message.

Nekumanesh said her statement came across as one-sided. He viewed it as a gesture of solidarity with Israel that failed to mention the lives of Palestinians killed by Israel.



Protestor who asked to be identified as Layla spoke to fellow protestors about the actions of Hamas and disatisfactions with the U.S. government on Oct. 17, 2023. Photo/Jesus Herrera