

## Kamala & Gaza

# All words, no deeds make divided party



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### OPINION

**This week's protests, which saw thousands of antiwar demonstrators take to the streets (lined with scores of Chicago police) in and around the United Center, pose a critical question to the Harris/Walz ticket: Can they bridge the yawning gulf that divides the street and the establishment on the matter of Israel's war on Palestine?**

**The answer is, probably not.**

**On Thursday night during her own showcase speech in which she formally accepted her party's nomination, Harris appeared full-throated in favor of ending the war in Gaza. But are words more important than deeds and were the few words issued on the subject this week persuasive to Democrats who want to actually see an end to the war, and at the very least, the American contribution to it?**

Up until Thursday night, Vermont's serial-presidential-also-ran Senator Bernie Sanders was the only other progressive on the DNC stage to give this issue some of the attention protesters believed it deserved (though he didn't go so far as to call for an arms embargo). Earlier in the week, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) threw out one line about Harris "working tirelessly to secure a cease-fire in Gaza" and bringing the captives home, and was quickly admonished for it, even by her own squad members. "Working tirelessly for a cease-fire is really not a thing, and they should be ashamed of themselves," charged Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.).

As antiwar activist and author Norman Solomon has noted, Harris "has toed President Biden's war line, while at times voicing sympathy for the victims of the Gaza war that's made possible by policies that she supports. Her words of compassion have yet to translate into opposing the pipeline of weapons and ammunition to the Israeli military as it keeps slaughtering Palestinian civilians."

Despite their best efforts, the protestors didn't get much traction this week. For proof of this, look no further than the fact that they couldn't even get a Palestinian-American speaker on stage because, as the Washington Post reported, "many Democratic leaders were concerned that such a speech from the podium would threaten the unity that has



been on vivid display at the convention."

Then there's the DNC platform, which recognizes America's "ironclad" commitment to Israel. The Harris/Walz ticket, reads the platform, is dedicated "to Israel's security, its qualitative military edge, its right to defend itself."

A press conference outside the DNC Wednesday morning featuring Reps. Omar, Cori Bush (D-Mo.), and two rather heroic members of Doctors Without Borders, who witnessed firsthand the horror in Gaza, was sparsely attended. Generally speaking, the mood among the antiwar activists out-

side the United Center was resigned.

Irene, who traveled from Long Island, New York, with Jewish Voices for Peace, told Responsible Statecraft (she did not want to use her last name) that in her view they had to do everything in their power to end the war but Biden was making it impossible given the billions in American money and weapons flowing to Israel today. "So, am I optimistic? I'm not optimistic. But silence is complicity." Despite the smears directed at them (guests on Fox News openly call demonstrators terrorists, Hamas sympathizers, and extremists) they are

not giving up. And why should they? Their position is a popular one. A recent CBS News/YouGov poll in June showed 61 percent of Americans oppose sending "weapons and supplies to Israel". Asked about the accusation made last month by Avril Haines, the Director of National Intelligence, that Iran is encouraging the protests, a union organizer from Chicago responded thusly to RS: "The drone strike pioneer Avril Haines? She's speaking out against protestors calling for an end to the slaughter of innocent civilians? At least she's consistent." Ann, another member of Jew-



Members of the Hawaii delegation hold signs with the names of people killed in Gaza during the roll call of states on Day 2 of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois, on August 20, 2024.  
● REUTERS

ish Voices for Peace, told RS that Harris's argument to the antiwar faction of the party that basically "it's me or Donald Trump" isn't going to fly. "I think it's a false argument and it's intentional and it's used to instill fear and uncertainty and to make progressives and people with a conscience to feel bad that we are going to put Trump in office," she said.

The contrast with the mood among the delegates couldn't be more stark. The Democrats in the convention hall this week were ebullient. At a DNC event Tuesday night, one came away with the impression that the election had already been won. Among the rank and file, Gaza is a mere afterthought. They might cheer on the idea of "cease-fire" as applause lines, and even support the policy, but are quick to move on and certainly did not have patience for chanting or theater outside or inside.

The attitude, expressed to RS by numerous delegates over the course of the week is: win first, sort out the details later. But meantime, the carnage in Gaza continues.

The full article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.



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# Democrats tuned out Gaza protests at DNC

## History won't forget



By Mike Ludwig  
Reporter

### PERSPECTIVE

**As Vice President Kamala Harris officially received the presidential nomination Thursday evening, thousands of people marched within sight of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) demanding an embargo on US arms shipments to Israel and an end to the war on Gaza.**

**Democrats wanted the protests — and any conversation about Palestine in general — kept on the sidelines of their convention as much as possible. But history will remember that the streets of Chicago were full of people demanding an end to genocide and occupation in Palestine as Harris took the stage.**

Led in part by Palestinian and Jewish activists, the march was a mixture of joy, anger, grief, and frustration that capped off a week of protests across downtown Chicago. Despite handwringing about security, the protests remained largely peaceful as an estimated 30,000 demonstrators took the streets over the course of the week.

Like previous protests, Thursday's mass march was surrounded by hundreds of police on foot and bicycle at all times. Demonstrators from across the country declared

Harris and President Joe Biden complicit with genocide in Gaza, where Israel's 10-month siege and assault has killed at least 40,000 people and left two-thirds of the enclave's buildings damaged or destroyed.

Some protesters were seasoned activists from the various movements that have found lines of solidarity with Palestine, including anti-war veterans, climate justice activists, and labor organizers. Others were simply horrified by the tremendous suffering in Gaza — and the Democratic Party's si-

lence on the issue after continuously arming Israel with weapons despite allegations of war crimes and forced starvation on the international stage.

"Our votes are no longer free or a given just for the sake that we are Democrats," said Inan, a Palestinian woman from the Chicago area marching with fellow feminists and antiwar activists. "[Harris] has to earn our votes by ending genocide today, tonight."

The full article first appeared on Truthout.



Pro-Palestinian protesters march during a demonstration near the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on August 22, 2024.  
● ALEX BRANDON/AP



Protesters clash with the police during a protest in support of Palestinians near the Israeli consulate, as the Democratic National Convention is held in Chicago, on August 20, 2024.  
● EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS