

THE SIT-INTIFADA – LIVE EVENT REPORTING

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Activist group SIT-INTIFADA have held a long term, sit in protest on the steps of the Victorian Parliament for the past 7 months, in support of the people of Palestine in light of the recent Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle East.

The group have been seen at the steps of Parliament of Victoria since October of 2023, making their presence known through numerous rallies, protest, and sit-ins, with aims of the liberation of the people of Palestine from ‘atrocities committed by the so called Israel’ (Jenn Brown 2024).

SIT-INTIFADA identify themselves as a ‘family-friendly movement’ with a focus on non-violence, but with a core concentration of ‘amplifying the Palestinian experience’. According to the groups page, the movement was created as a space to ‘sit in vigil’ and express the desire for justice for Palestine.

The location of the daily sit in protest is highly significant to the goals of the group, as well as the frequency in which they visit, the group believe that by sitting in the same place every day, it shows to the member of Parliament that the ‘crisis of liberation’ for the people of Palestine is not going anywhere ‘and neither are [they]’.

Site frequenter, Jenn Brown, has been attending the steps of parliament house as a member of SIT-INTIFADA since late November 2023, as she was appalled by what she was seeing on the news and needed a space to talk and express her stance on the issue. Brown as a social worker herself, has always held issues of social justice close to her heart, with the current conflict striking a cord for her to take part in the movement.

Brown identified the action of sitting at the steps daily creates a safe space for people who are passionate about the ‘protection of Palestine’, a place where anyone can come and share their passion and concerns in a “non-violent and non-toxic’ place of meeting.

Brown made the connection between the current issues in Gaza, to the tensed relationship between Australia and its own Indigenous population, stating ‘politician will find it difficult to understand the plight of the people of Gaza, because they refuse to acknowledge their strained relationship with our native peoples’.

Mohammed Sharab is a founding member of the SIT-INTIFADA movement, attending the sit in protests since their origin in October of last year. Sharab is also responsible for the organisation of many rallies and protests that have taken place in the Melbourne CBD since October 7th, 2023. Sharab openly condemns the actions of Israel, stating that as a western country “the responsibility falls to us, as we are not a war-torn civilisation’, with the suggestion that there is an on us as Australians to protect more vulnerable nations.

As a Palestinian man himself, Sharab’s purpose for participation in the SIT-INTIFADA movement is a personal one, as he has a distinct connection to the “atrocities faced by innocent civilians”. When asked about the development of the group, he, and other Palestinian nationals, felt it ‘essential’ to show support for their ‘brothers and sisters’ even

from the other side of the world. Sharab stated that he acts on the basis of ‘solidarity for the people of Gaza’ and in immense criticism of the state and federal governments conduct during the length of the conflict.

The SIT-INTIFADA movement has become a uniquely identifiable part of the Parliament of Victoria, in an unexpected way. By standing firm on their laurels and position, the group has the means and voices behind them to promote real change within government, and the way in which it treats the sovereign state of Palestine.

REFERENCES

1. Sit-Intifada, T. (2023) *As-salāmu ‘alaykum*. Available at: <https://thesitintifada.substack.com/p/as-salamu-alaykum> (Accessed: 23 April 2024).

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