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NOLA fights for Palestine through the holidays

written by Gregory E. Williams
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NOLA musicians playing Palestinian music led a procession through the French Quarter packed with people out to celebrate the first night of Carnival.

Throughout the holiday season, people in New Orleans and surrounding towns have continued to protest in the streets for Palestine. That continued throughout Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and is carrying over into the area's most distinctive season, Mardi Gras.

Die-in at Lakeside Mall

[NOSHIP](#) (New Orleans Stop Helping Israel's Ports) is an organization formed after Oct. 7 that is calling for the Port of New Orleans and other city and state entities to cut ties with the Zionist regime. NOSHIP led a demonstration outside the packed Lakeside in Metairie, Louisiana, the day before Christmas Eve.

This was not an easy feat in the suburban sprawl of one of the town's biggest shopping areas at the height of the holiday rush. Despite difficulties, some 50 pro-Palestine demonstrators gathered outside and conducted a lively rally in a high-traffic median. A handful of hostile motorists shouted obscenities, but they were outnumbered by others waving, honking, and raising their fists in support.

In the spirit of the radical LGBTQ+ movements of the past like ACT UP, a group of activists inside the mall carried out a die-in, lying on the ground while holding placards with the names of Palestinians - including children - martyred by the Washington-backed Zionist forces.

Mall security massed around them and ejected them from the building, but many shoppers heard the message. The protesters outside cheered for these activists as they exited the mall and joined the crowd.



Activists who carried out the die-in left the mall in single file, holding signs with the names of Palestinians murdered by the occupation forces.

Roll 'Til Palestine is Free

Jan. 6 was Epiphany, the first day of Mardi Gras, when the beloved Joan of Arc Parade is held in the city. This is the first Mardi Gras parade of the season.

That same night, hundreds joined in a march through the packed French Quarter, led by a brass band playing Palestinian music. The flier read, "Procession for Palestine: New Orleans Musicians Roll 'Til Palestine is Free!"

Many bystanders out for Carnival celebrations were energized by the message, often joining in the chants for a free Palestine.

One speaker said, "U.S.-made bombs are falling on Palestinians as we speak. Carnival season starts on this night, but we're not stopping until Palestine is free!"

The crowd cheered wildly.

She continued: “Louisiana is giving \$25 million to the Israeli military per year. Do we want that money for our roads? Do we want that money for schools? Do we want that money for housing?” The crowd shouted in the affirmative.



Some 50 people gathered in the busy median outside Lakeside Mall in Metairie, Louisiana, on the day before Christmas Eve.

A Palestinian musician and activist named Marco spoke towards the end of the night.

“Gaza has been under siege for 17 years. The blockade on Gaza has always sought to deprive Palestinians access to the most basic necessities of food, medicine, essential construction materials, and so on.

“But it doesn’t stop there. The occupation forces that control what is allowed to come in and out of Gaza have always done their best to stifle Palestinian life and Palestinian joy in any way that they can. One such way that they attempt to do so is by banning musical instruments from entering Gaza.

“As musicians and as music lovers in the city of New Orleans – a place with a long and deep history of music as well as a music scene and culture that is very much alive in the present, as is very clear all around us – we should all know how intimately connected music is to living a life that is full. ...

“But life finds a way, resistance finds a way. The tunnels built by the resistance in Gaza have also been used to bring in instruments. ...

“All of you here are part of the reason that Israel will never be able to erase Palestinians! ...

“Sing and play and dance with us, but fight with us too! Ceasefire now! We’re gonna end the genocide in Gaza, end the siege, end the occupation, and end the Zionist slander of Palestinian humanity!”

