

Israel — and Britain’s Hard Right — May Be Losing Their War in the UK

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The overhead image is of the packed London streets from Park Lane to the US Embassy on the south side of the Thames.

The Metropolitan Police estimate of the crowd on 11 November was more than 300,000, but participants believe it was larger — much larger. Organisers claimed 800,000, the second-largest turnout (after the February 2003 protest against War in Iraq) in modern British history.

There were Muslims. There were Jews, including children of Holocaust survivors. There were people of all faiths, and of no specific faith. There were the elderly, and teens in their first demonstration.

They had gathered — loudly but peacefully — to call for an end to the mass killing of Gaza’s civilians. In this gathering was a notable shift in the response from those over the previous cycles of violence in the Strip: in 2008, 2014, 2018, and 2021.

“Israel’s leaders may soon claim they have ‘won’,” said a political analyst who was in the crowd, “but they have lost with the public in the UK.”

And Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his War Cabinet were not the only losers on this Saturday.

[See also EA on France 24: Why Israel’s Mass Killing Threatens Hamas’s Hostages in Gaza.](#)



The second image is of a young man amid the far smaller group of counter-protesters looking to confront the hundreds of thousands. He has pulled up his jacket to show off the tattoo on his side. It is a swastika.

In this image was the defeat of Britain's hard right: of the men spitting and swearing at the police as well as the main demonstration — and of the politicians who had egged them on.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman had staked her political future, with its vision of 10 Downing Street, on labeling the rally of Muslims, the Jews, the people of all faiths and of no faith as a “hate march”. When the Metropolitan Police refused to ban the demonstration, Braverman berated them — in a lengthy article in *The Times* — as biased appeasers.

But when the real hate was unveiled, it was not among Braverman's enemies. It was in the faces and fists of those whom she incited. With that visceral display, the hard right — profiting from the division of Brexit, of their scapegoating of “immigrants”, of their whipped-up “culture war” — may finally have been checked in their aspirations.

[Suella Crosses the Line](#)

Israel's leaders took no apparent notice of the March in London. The bombs and missiles continued to rain down in Gaza. A token trickle of aid through Egypt's Rafah crossing could not obscure the humanitarian crisis — more than half of Gaza's surviving 2.3 million population displaced in overcrowded shelters with no water, no bread, and no hope. Israeli forces besieged the al-Shifa hospital, as premature babies and other patients died from the cut-off of essential care.

But UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak — despite a false “both sides” narrative of violence by both the hard-right men and “ Hamas sympathisers ” — could not avoid noticing. Braverman had defied Number 10 by not clearing her Times broadside against the police. Now the violent fruit of her rhetoric had fallen on the Government's doorstep.

[Suella Braverman's War on Migrants Is Damaging the UK.](#)

So two days after the March, Sunak sacked the Home Secretary, replacing her with the far less demonstrative James Cleverley. To fill Cleverley's previous role as Foreign Secretary, he brought back David Cameron, the Prime Minister whose calamitous referendum misstep opened the doors to the Brexit whirlwind. The pragmatic Jeremy Hunt remained as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The message was sent. The agitators — including Braverman, whom Sunak had courted to become Prime Minister in October 2022 — had been ushered out of the room, and the sensible adults had been allowed in.

As a sop to the hard right, Sunak summoned Esther McVey, a backbench MP who moonlighted as a host on the polemical GB “News”. In an unwitting homage to George Orwell, she will be “Minister of Common Sense” to fight the spectre of the “woke”, whoever and wherever that might be.

But Braverman vented all her spleen in a departure letter which accused Sunak of betrayal and “magical thinking”.

“You have manifestly and repeatedly failed to deliver on every one of [our] key policies. Either your distinctive style of government means you are incapable of doing so. Or, as I must surely conclude now, you never had any intention of keeping your promises.”

[Living Up to “Never Again”](#)

Defeat does not mean disappearance. Israel's political and military command show no sign of easing their retribution of mass killing — more than 11,000 dead, before Gaza's Health Ministry could no longer keep count — for Hamas's mass murder of more than 1,200 Israeli citizens and foreign nationals on 7 October. For more days, possibly weeks or even months, civilians and Hamas's 240 hostages are expendable.

Braverman and her hard-right colleagues are unsubtly plotting. They are meeting to plan the downfall of Sunak. They will seek advantage from Wednesday's Supreme Court decision striking down their headline policy of despatching asylum seekers more than 6,000 miles to Rwanda. The European Court of Human Rights and “woke” judges will join immigrants and Rishi as the pantomime villains in their network of TV talkfests and tabloid headlines.

They will continue the dog-whistle tactics that have propelled their Brexit-honed careers. But as previous hard-right movements have learned, sometimes there are limits to the effectiveness of division, vitriol, and hatred.

Sometimes that limit is reached in a bunker after a climactic loss. And sometimes that limit comes through the exposure of violence and destruction: when good people rally to call for a halt to the denial of lives, liberty, and security.

As my journalist friend, another participant in the March in London, said with both sadness and a glimmer of hope: “Never Again. Not just Never Again for one people in one country, but Never Again for all people in all countries.”