

Israeli Visitors Anger Pro-Palestinian Residents in Amsterdam

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*The Israeli media spoon feeds the Jewish population with anti-Arab rhetoric, while keeping world opinion on Israel out of sight. **When the Maccabi Tel Aviv football fans arrived in Amsterdam for a match against Ajax, they were shocked to see Palestinian flags flying. Israel bans all Palestinian flags in Israel, Gaza and the Occupied West Bank.***

Football fans are usually young, and passionate about their team. Many traveling football fans have reputations for violence, hard drinking and hooliganism. Add to the mix an ongoing genocide in Gaza which almost every country on earth has condemned, and the Israeli fans felt isolated, unwelcome and angry.

The young Jews were caught off guard in Amsterdam, and perhaps they had not been well informed about the atmosphere they were entering into. Last spring, the [University of Amsterdam](#) had held student and faculty protests in support of Palestine, following the trend in America. Dutch students demanded that their universities [divest of any ties with Israel](#), as part of the Boycott, Sanction, Divest (BSD) movement gaining worldwide support. The protests were met with an extremely brutal police crackdown in Amsterdam.

On November 6, the [Israeli fans tore down Palestinian flags](#) around the city, burned one flag and [attacked a taxi driver](#) who they targeted as looking like an Arab. In response, a group of taxi drivers came to confront the Israelis, but the police were alerted to the risk of violence and stepped in to prevent danger to the Israelis.

On November 7, Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters had gathered in Dam Square in the afternoon, and around 10 people there were arrested for criminal offences including disrupting public disorder, police said. Later, the Israelis were en route to the game and were videoed on an escalator shouting [“F**k the Arabs”](#) and while sitting in the stadium they were heard to chant praises to the [Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza](#), and mocking the dead children in Gaza. The game authorities had asked all in attendance to observe a minute of silence in honor of the hundreds dead from floods in Spain. The [Jews mocked the silence and jeered the victims in Spain](#), in reaction to Spain’s embargo on weapons sent to Israel.

The Dutch team, [Ajax, won the match 5-0 against Maccabi Tel Aviv](#). The Israeli fans must have been angry at losing, and their visit to Amsterdam had turned into a disappointing trip.

On November 8, the news of the actions and attitudes of the Israeli fans had swept through the city, and some residents were ready to react to the visitors who they felt were out of touch with Dutch and global opinion.

The Palestine Football Association (PFA) said it was concerned by the violent events in Amsterdam, which it said began with the words and actions of the Israeli fans.

The PFA recalled a previous incident where an Arab man was beaten unconscious by a group of Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters in Greece, and called on UEFA and FIFA to address the normalization of genocidal, racist, and Islamophobic rhetoric among Israeli football fans.

[The Dutch King](#), [the Mayor of Amsterdam](#), [Ursula von der Leyen](#), and [Josep Borrell](#) all labeled the three days of violence as acts demonstrating anti-Semitism. European leaders decided the easiest way out was to blame themselves, the Dutch, and paint the Israelis as innocent victims of Jew-haters, while ignoring that Europeans have become aware of the injustices Palestinians are suffering in Gaza.

US **President Joe Biden** said the attacks “echo dark moments in history when Jews were persecuted”. Lame-duck President Biden will go down in history as the man who could have stopped the genocide in Gaza, but refused. The War on Gaza is Biden’s war. If he had stopped the cash and weapon flow to Israel, lives could have been saved, but he instead turned on the green light even brighter for **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**.

The [Dutch who fly a Palestinian flag](#), or march in a street protest, or participate in a campus sit-in in solidarity with Palestine are doing so because they enjoy freedom and self-determination in the Netherlands. They feel that Palestinians deserve the same freedom, and that a brutal military occupation in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank should be ended since the International Court of Justice ruled the Israel’s occupation is unjust and must stop.

It is possible that some in Amsterdam are anti-Semitic; however, the vast majority of Europeans are not. In general, the Dutch are freedom-loving and open-minded. They are well-educated and well-informed by a media which is free and access to divergent opinions through the internet is readily available. The Dutch, like most of the world, have come to view the Israeli attack on the Palestinian people in Gaza, in which over 40,000 have been killed and are mainly women and children, is unjust and should be stopped immediately through a ceasefire and negotiations.

In the aftermath of the Amsterdam violence, the Dutch media has spun the story with a Moroccan twist. Media personalities and political figures have come out blaming Moroccans in Amsterdam as the cause of violence.

Sander Sassen, a political commentator for NieuwRechts outlet, accused Moroccans of causing the chaos in Amsterdam. He claims the viral videos show that Moroccan youths targeted the Israeli fans in Amsterdam. The news outlet is associated with the far right in the Netherlands.

Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch far-right Party for Freedom (PVV), well known for his anti-immigrant stance including the Moroccan community, criticized the Dutch authorities for not better protecting the Israeli fans.

Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands, currently numbering about 419,272, have long been singled out for collective, and unfounded blame. Politicians, eager to place blame on people and not themselves, have fueled negative stereotypes and social divisions.

Wilders was convicted of discrimination and inciting hatred after he referred to the Moroccan community in the country as a “scum” during a campaign rally back in 2014. He

was convicted for his remarks in 2016, and a court upheld the conviction in July of 2021.

On 28 May 2024, Norway, Ireland and Spain recognized the State of Palestine, the latter two being EU member-states. The Netherlands does not recognize Palestine, but does support the UN ratified two-state solution.

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This article was originally published on [Mideast Discourse](#).

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Featured image: Israeli Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters light flares in Amsterdam, on 7 November 2024 (Reuters)

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