

Campus protest

Palestinians blast Israeli occupation

by Yvonne Stephan

Over 200 demonstrators on campus Friday afternoon protested the recent Palestinian killings by Israelis on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, shouting "Long live Palestine, long live the PLO" and "People united will never be defeated."

The march, organized by the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), began at noon on the campus core, then proceeded downtown before concluding back at the University.

The students were supported by the Palestinian community which closed its shops during the demonstration which lasted two hours.

The march included not only University students but small children and older men and women. The majority of the demonstrators were Palestinians.

"We're telling the student body and the Youngstown community about the latest Israeli actions of the killings and beatings of our

people living on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," Mahmoud Eltibi, senior, Business, and spokesperson for GUPS, said during the demonstration.

He noted that two persons were killed recently in a mosque in Jerusalem and that school children and adults protesting the military occupation of the Gaza Strip had been gunned down.

"We also want to affirm our support with our people and the fight against all forms of Israeli occupation," Eltibi said.

Some students were handing out leaflets explaining the recent Israeli actions, while others were chanting, "Mr. Mayor, please don't go to Israel."

This chant referred to the dismissals and threats that elected mayors, living in the towns of Al-Birah, Ramallah and Nablus on the West Bank, have received lately.

Spectators expressed feelings ranging from ignorance to apathy to anger.

Some spectators asked what is Palestine and who are Palestinians. Others shrugged and walked by, while other persons mentioned
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Shouting pro-PLO slogans, the local Palestinian community and some YSU students marched on campus and through Youngstown Friday afternoon to protest Israeli occupation on the Gaza Strip and West Bank. (Photo by Yvonne Stephan)

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bringing out their placards of the early 70s to protest the May 4, 1970 killings at Kent State University.

However, some onlookers shouted from their vehicles in support of the PLO, while others heckled.

Violence nearly erupted when

protestors, marching in the street in front of the Youngstown city police station, blocked traffic.

A police officer threatened to break up the demonstration and to imprison those remaining in the street.

The protestors retreated to the sidewalk, and the police escorted

them until they reached YSU.

Eltibi said that Israel is trying to dominate and to annex the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which have been occupied by Israelis since the 1967 war.

He noted that the only option available to Israel is to liquidate the PLO physically from Southern Lebanon, which he said he believed would pave the way for final annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

He said that the PLO has been "expecting an Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon for a long

time."

Eltibi explained that the only option for the PLO is to fight for its physical survival by holding ground in Southern Lebanon.

He readily admitted that Israel can physically crush the PLO, but

added, "They (the Israelis) will never crush the will and the spirit of the Palestinians because they're fighting for human dignity, independence and freedom, while Israel represents a colonial concept based on conquest."