

# ‘NY Times’ Won’t Explain Why Palestinians Aren’t Joining the Big Anti-Netanyahu Demonstrations in Israel

The U.S. media has missed one key part of the anti-Netanyahu protest story: the shockingly different ways Israeli police and military treat Jewish and Palestinian protests.

By [James North](#)

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*Here’s a [revealing video](#) from Jerusalem, at one of the massive demonstrations that are shaking Israel’s far-right wing government. Note the sea of Israeli flags in the background, characteristic of the weeks of protest so far. And then watch what happens when some brave soul unfurls a Palestinian flag, perhaps to test Israel’s “democracy.” His attackers look like a combination of security officials and possibly other bystanders. This is yet another sign of Israeli apartheid.*

[pic.twitter.com/2gj6v4QFWK](https://pic.twitter.com/2gj6v4QFWK) אין דמוקרטיה עם כיבוש, ירושלים. קרדיט טליה נמחיה.

— Fadi Amun | פאדי אמון | فادي أمون (@FadiAmun) [March 27, 2023](#)

It is a mistake to dismiss the nationwide protests in Israel as insignificant. In the mainstream U.S. press, Netanyahu is getting by far the most negative coverage that I can recall any Israeli government ever receiving in my (long) lifetime. But the U.S. media, so far, is (unsurprisingly) missing one key element of the story: the shockingly different ways that the Israeli police and military treat Jewish and Palestinian protests.

A brief *New York Times* [snippet today](#) (by Raja Abdulrahim) does note that Israel’s Palestinian citizens “have largely stayed on the sidelines” in the current protest wave. But

the brief mini-article asserts that the Palestinian lack of interest is because “the demonstrations have ignored issues important to them, such as ending the occupation of the West Bank.”

This is undoubtedly true, but incomplete. You have to turn to Odeh Bisharat, a Palestinian who writes a regular column in the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, for more. Bisharat [explains](#) how he joined a pro-democracy vigil (of both Jews and Palestinians) in his town of Yafia. A pointed question from a young Palestinian passer-by prompted Bisharat to analyze how Israel’s authorities react differently depending on who is protesting.

Here is his comparison. He noted that last Thursday, overwhelmingly Jewish protesters staged a nationwide day of paralysis, blocking roads and preventing ministers from speaking at conferences:

By the end of this stormy day, 108 protesters had been arrested, of whom 100 were released that same day and the remainder the next day.

Bisharat then recalled nationwide protests back in May 2021, which were predominately carried out by Palestinian citizens of Israel. That time,

. . . 3660 Arabs were arrested and 350 were indicted. The sentences were monstrous — months and sometimes even many years in jail. Even those lucky enough not to be charged sat in jail for weeks and sometimes months before they were released.

Peter Beinart made a similar point in [a tweet](#). Anshel Pfeffer, a prominent Jewish Israeli journalist, said he was thankful that “there has been no bloodshed in any of the pro-democracy protests.” Beinart responded:

Do you think that fact that there’s been no state violence against the protesters has anything to do with the fact that it’s Jews protesting and not Palestinians?”

At least the *New York Times* did mention Palestinians, even in passing. The latest *Washington Post* [coverage](#) has no mention of Palestinian citizens of Israel at all, even though they constitute a fifth of the population inside Israel’s 1967 borders. And National Public Radio’s report this morning was [characteristically inept](#).

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*Featured image: SCREENSHOT OF VIDEO SHOWING PROTESTERS AND SECURITY FORCES WRESTLING A PALESTINIAN FLAG OUT OF ANOTHER PROTESTER’S HANDS DURING AN ANTI-NETANYAHU PROTEST IN ISRAEL. (IMAGE: TWITTER/@FADIAMUN)*

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