

Statement on the cancellation of Mandla Mandela's visit by the British state – from the organisers of the demonstration.

The British government has succumbed to Israeli pressure and effectively denied the entry of Mandla Mandela, grandson of the great Anti-Apartheid hero Nelson Mandela, for his British tour in solidarity with the Palestinians against Israel's genocide.

Last-minute Visa restrictions were imposed by the British Consulate in South Africa, which had never been necessary on his many previous visits. We know that this has nothing to do with procedural Visa-related issues, but with the government preventing influential pro-Palestine voices from addressing the people in Britain.

Like Mandla Mandela, grandfather Nelson Mandela fought against Apartheid in South Africa while supporting the similar liberation struggle of the Palestinians against Israel's decades-long Apartheid and ethnic cleansing. Mandela was demonised by the government and British press at the time, and the Nobel Peace Prize winner would be disgusted with the cancellation. As he famously said, "Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

We have seen how for the last two weeks Israel's lobby, supported by the British media's well-known role of regurgitating Israeli propaganda, have been inciting against Mandela and pushing for the cancellation of a weeks-long tour in England and Scotland.

More than ever, the British establishment is showing its true colours, attempting to silence and cancel prominent pro-Palestinian voices to an unprecedented level. Is it not enough for the imperialist powers to send endless weapons to aid Israel in its slaughter of Palestinians, that so far have murdered over 20,000 Gaza children in 1 year? Just as it was with South African Apartheid, standing on the right side of history is met with repression and criminalisation.

Here in Manchester we were meant to have Mandela join our student and community demonstration on Friday to hear from the heroes of apartheid South Africa on their fight for emancipation, and to demand the University of Manchester cut its ties with genocidal Israel, just as it was pressured to do with Apartheid South Africa. We were meant to stand together in solidarity, with a collective aspiration to rid this world from oppression and colonisation, something the British establishment clearly could not accept.

Shame on those who silence the voices of freedom fighters while supporting settler-colonial regimes built through ethnic cleansing and plunder. The silencing will never deter us just as it never deterred Mandela and black South Africans who courageously forced out the Apartheid with the help of solidarity from around the world.

To every attempt to crush our morale and movement we will keep rising up with the same spirit of defiance. We will continue with our fight to end the complicity of British institutions in the suffering of Palestinians, and until we witness a liberated Palestine from the river to the sea!