Proposal for 1-week non-stop picket

The idea: A non-stop picket outside the US Embassy, initially from 1st - 15th September. Depending on the success of the picket, there is potential to extend it.

If the picket is extended to a longer-term action, it has the potential to become a focal point and community hub for Gaza solidarity in (South?) London. The idea of non-stop pickets has potential to spread to other locations.

The inspiration for the idea is the non-stop picket that was held outside the South African embassy in London, calling for the release of Nelson Mandela. The picket was set up in 1986 and was a constant 24/7 presence until Mandela's release in 1990.

You can read more about the non-stop picket here.

Main objective and calls:

Our main objective is to clarify to the public the fact that Israel is a US proxy and that the US can end all of this with a decision. We are saying to the US: This is your genocide. This is your apartheid. Israel's crimes are your crimes.
Our immediate calls are:

- Permanent ceasefire
- Immediate end to the blockade of humanitarian aid
- Immediate arms embargo

Our ultimate demand is to end the occupation, end the apartheid and for complete and total equality between all people from the river to the sea.

Start date:

The current proposed launch date is Sunday 14th April at 18:00.

Duration:

The picket will last until Sunday 21 April at 18:00. If there is consensus to extend, we will extend on a week-by-week basis.

Location:

The non-stop picket will be held outside the US Embassy which is in Wandsworth. This is a short walk from Vauxhall tube/train/bus station which is under 1km away.

There is a perfect base opposite the embassy. A painted wooden hut (Nine Elms Pavilion) will be the basecamp. It has a direct view to the embassy and vice versa so the picket will be very visible to embassy staff.

Basecamp opposite embassy View of embassy from basecamp Location on map

Logistics:

As with the Mandela non-stop picket, there will be a rota of people coming day and night. The current proposal is a one-week rota. Two-hour shifts will be populated throughout each 24-hour period, but people are welcome to stay for longer. The shift times are organised so that there is overlap between the two-hour shifts, eg: 12:00 – 14:00, 14:00 – 16:00 but also 13:00 – 15:00, 15:00 – 17:00 etc. Each shift requires a minimum of ten/fifteen people to sign up, to accommodate late cancellations and for safeguarding purposes.

Basecamp equipment can include portable stools/chairs, gazebo, tent (?), fleece blankets etc. A first aid kit will be available and qualified first aiders will self-identify on the rota. St Thomas' hospital is located v nearby and has an A&E department.

Reps for groups will send out a link for participants to select their slots, using their names or an alias. Details provided will be stored securely and only accessed by the core organising group.

As with the Mandela picket, our presence would be amplified with banners, placards, leaflets, events. There is huge potential to use the site for all sorts of activities and events. Wifi to be made available.

Media:

We would inform local and national media, be active on social media. The messaging will reflect the main objective and calls, above.

Legality:

We will aim to have legal observers at the site as much as possible.

The UK human rights organisation Liberty have said the picket is legal.

Further information on the right to protest, in the context of the Gaza protests, can be found on their site: https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice_information/explainer-palestine-protests/#page-section-7

Having looked at this, it seems the only potential problem could come from claims that we are creating a "serious disruption to the life of the community." Such claims might arise due to the residential building, Elm Quay Court, which is about 100yds from the basecamp. Additionally, the Liberty info points out, "community" in this context can mean anyone. We don't anticipate that this would be the case and our intention is to be respectful of their proximity to our basecamp. Looking at the stipulation for what constitutes "serious disruption" it is unlikely that will be relevant to us.

Noisy protests can also be restricted where noise has "relevant and significant impact on persons in the vicinity." Again, this is unlikely to apply to us, given the criteria stipulated on the Liberty site. We are seeking further legal advice on this

Code of conduct:

Please see our CoC here: https://tinyurl.com/2eww37y3

Solidarity:

We look forward to coming together with you all in solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for freedom.