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Silent Vigil in Manchester Marks 86 Weeks of Solidarity with the People of Palestine

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Amnesty International's Manchester group will hold its 86th silent vigil this Friday, 18 July, demonstrating continued support for civilians affected by the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The weekly gathering is set to take place in St Peter's Square from 5 pm to 6 pm, in front of the Central Library.

Organisers have been clear that the vigil is intended as a peaceful event, emphasising reflection rather than protest. Participants are asked not to bring placards, banners, flags or chants of their own. Instead, the group plans to display a single, large banner stretching nearly 60 feet. Bearing statements such as “Ceasefire Now,” “Stop the Genocide,” “Humanitarian Aid Now”, and “Stop Arms Sales,” the banner calls attention to the severe humanitarian crisis that has unfolded in Gaza over recent months.

Those attending are encouraged to bring a chair if needed, as the vigil is expected to last a full hour. In the event of rain or high winds, smaller placards will be provided as an alternative to the banner. The atmosphere of the gathering is intended to be solemn, with organisers requesting silence as a mark of respect for those who have lost their lives or remain unaccounted for.

In a statement shared by Amnesty International Manchester, organisers said: “We stand in solidarity with all civilians impacted by this conflict. We call for an immediate ceasefire, the protection of human rights, and an end to violations of international law.” The group also called for the release of hostages and political prisoners, echoing longstanding concerns over civilian casualties and alleged war crimes.

While the event is not affiliated with any political party, its message has attracted a diverse mix of participants, including human rights campaigners, community members, and faith groups. Critics have argued that repeated vigils risk fuelling division, while supporters contend that maintaining public attention is vital to pressuring governments and international bodies to act.

The conflict in Gaza has prompted heated debate across Britain’s political spectrum. While some policymakers have focused on Israel’s right to defend itself, others have raised urgent questions about proportionality and the protection of non-combatants. The vigil in Manchester is part of a wider network of solidarity actions taking place in towns and cities around the UK.

Those wishing to attend Friday’s vigil can simply arrive at St Peter’s Square ahead of 5 pm. No prior registration is required. Organisers have reiterated that the event will remain non-violent and apolitical, to honour victims and demand adherence to international humanitarian law.