

India's far-right government joins imperialist powers in backing Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza

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India's Narendra Modi-led far-right government has publicly lined up with the imperialist powers in giving full-throated support to Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza.

Last Friday, India joined the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and virtually every other NATO power and US treaty ally in opposing the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution that called for "an immediate, lasting, and long-term humanitarian cease-fire" between Israel and Hamas.

This under conditions where 7,000 Palestinians, almost half of them children, have already been slaughtered by Israeli bombing and shelling, and where multiple UN agencies and humanitarian organizations were warning of an impending human "catastrophe" due to Israel's blockade of food, water, medical supplies, electricity and fuel.

Proposed by Jordan, the non-binding ceasefire resolution won the support of 120 UN member states.

The US, Israel and 12 other states, including four smaller European Union members and several South Pacific island states, voted against the ceasefire resolution; while India and 44 other states, all of them Western powers or their clients, like Ukraine, signaled their support for Israel continuing to wage war on the people of Gaza by abstaining.

That India's vote was a reiteration and amplification of the support it gave Israel at the very outset of the current war was underscored by its vote earlier Friday *in support* of an amendment to the ceasefire resolution authored by Canada, one of Washington's closest imperialist allies. The amendment, which failed to secure enough "yes" votes to be adopted, aimed at legitimizing Israel's war on the Palestinians of Gaza. It "unequivocally" condemned Hamas's "terrorist attacks" and its "taking of hostages" and demanded their "immediate and unconditional release," while passing over in silence all of the Israeli state's war crimes—including the brutal collective punishment of Gaza's 2.3 million residents through the systematic denial of basic life necessities and the mass bombing of residential neighbourhoods, hospitals, refugee camps, mosques and churches.

New Delhi subsequently justified its refusal to support the ceasefire resolution, by noting that it did not contain the words "Hamas" and "hostages." India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Yojna Patel complained, "The terror attacks in Israel on 7th October were shocking and deserve condemnation."

However, as Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram noted in answering Canada in the General Assembly debate, the ceasefire resolution deliberately omitted mention of Israel, Hamas or any other

party.

But for Patel and the Modi government, what was unacceptable was that the resolution did not repeat the war propaganda of the Israeli state, Washington and its other imperialist sponsors in condemning the October 7 Hamas attack—a popular uprising of an oppressed people—as "terrorism." As for the resolution's failure to indict Israel for its genocidal assault on Gaza, to say nothing of the Zionist state's three-quarter-century long dispossession and suppression of the Palestinian people, that did not concern them in the slightest.

At the very beginning of Israel's onslaught on Gaza, Modi rushed to align India with Israel's far-right Netanyahu government, tweeting a message that declared "we stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour."

India's full-throated support for Israel's genocidal war on the largely defenseless people of Gaza is an abhorrent expression of the dramatic change in New Delhi's strategic alignment since the beginning of the century and emergence as a junior partner of US imperialism. Long gone are the days when India postured as a supporter of "anti-imperialist" struggles and the Palestinian people and as a leader of the "non-aligned world."

As the *World Political Review* noted on October 19, Modi's "statement was almost startling for its timing and forthrightness. Not even U.S. President Joe Biden had expressed his support for Israel yet. There was no ambivalence in Modi's words, no hedging, no waiting period for a committee to craft a diplomatic communiqué."

Building on the Indo-US "global strategic partnership" the Congress Party-led United Progressive Alliance government forged with the George W. Bush administration, the Modi government has transformed India into a frontline state into the US military-strategic offensive against China. In August, the Modi government let it be known that it is working with the high command of India's armed forces to identify what support it will provide the US if and when Washington goes to war with Beijing.

While pursuing its own great-power ambitions, India is working closely with the US to counter Chinese influence across Asia and Africa. In recent years, the Middle East has emerged as a major arena of this collaboration, with Washington working to integrate New Delhi into its plans to counter Russian and Chinese influence in the region. In October 2021, India joined with the US, Israel and the UAE in forming the so-called I2U2 group. And in September, while attending the G-20 summit in New Delhi, US President Joe Biden outlined Washington's ambition to spearhead the development of an India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor to boost India as an

alternative global production chain hub to China.

A second, albeit lesser factor, in India's support for Israel's war on the Palestinians is the close military-strategic relations New Delhi has forged with Jerusalem. Israel is among India's principal foreign providers of weapons and weapon systems. India's and Israel's intelligence agencies also work closely together. It has been acknowledged that Mossad arranged for the Israeli-based NSO group to sell its Pegasus spyware to the Modi government, which has made wide use of it in illegally surveilling its political opponents.

Modi's Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the network of Hindu right-wing organizations with which they are aligned also have strong political and ideological sympathy for Israel, especially the most bellicose and exclusivist Zionist factions. Both castigate Muslims as their common enemy and use gangster methods to achieve their ends.

Like capitalist elites around the world, India's adopted Washington's post 9/11 "war on terror" rhetoric. New Delhi used it to justify an increasingly aggressive stance against its longtime strategic rival Pakistan and the adoption of draconian "anti-terror" laws that have been used to jail and frame-up dissidents. While Washington has shifted gears in recent years in line with its developing global confrontation with Russia and China, New Delhi and Jerusalem continue to find it useful to cast themselves as global leaders in the fight against "terror."

In keeping with India's pro-Israel stance, authorities across the country have ordered police to attack pro-Palestinian demonstrations. Meantime, Hindu supremacist groups have staged pro-Israel demonstrations. On October 25, the Bajrang Dal provocatively marched through Aligarh, a city in Uttar Pradesh with a Muslim minority of more than 40 percent, shouting slogans such as "Down with Palestine" and "Down with Hamas." Last week, scores of Indian military veterans organized by the *Hindu Sena* (Hindu Army) descended on the Israeli embassy in New Delhi to volunteer to "fight Hamas."

The Modi government's embrace of Israeli's war on Gaza, like its ever-closer integration into Washington's preparations for war with China, are widely supported by Indian ruling elite.

In an October 30 editorial, the *Times of India* said, "India's decision to abstain from voting in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution on Friday was correct in the backdrop of what's happening not just in Israel but also elsewhere." The latter is a reference to India's need to placate Washington for defying its wishes in respect to the NATO war on Russia and maintaining close strategic ties with Moscow, by aligning itself more completely with US imperialism "elsewhere."

The *Indian Express* also hailed India's vote at the UN, saying it "marks a new realism in Middle East policy," and this "new realism is welcome."

The main opposition party, the Congress Party, by contrast has sharply criticized the government for not voting for a ceasefire. Priyanka Gandhi, a senior Congress leader and prominent member of the Nehru-Gandhi family dynasty that has led the party since Indian independence, said she was "shocked and ashamed that our country has abstained from voting for a ceasefire in Gaza. Our country was founded on the principles of non-violence and truth, principles for which our freedom fighters laid down their lives. These principles form the basis of the constitution that defines our nationhood."

All this is political blather. It was a Congress government that established full diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1992, as

part of its strategic reorientation of India, economically and politically, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. More broadly, Congress-led governments did much of the heavy lifting in establishing the Indian bourgeoisie's strategic partnership with US imperialism. Like the rest of the political establishment, the Congress Party views that reactionary alliance as the cornerstone of India's foreign policy.

Far from warning against India being harnessed to US imperialism's war drive against China, Congress Party leaders frequently attack the Modi government from the right, accusing it of being "soft" on China, including in the border conflict that has seen the two countries forward deploy tens of thousands of troops, tanks and warplanes along their disputed border.

Congress's mild criticism of the Modi government's stance on the Gaza war has nothing to do with any sympathy for the Palestinian people or opposition to imperialism. It is rooted in electoral calculations—Congress wants to exploit the Indian masses' immense sympathy for the Palestinian people in the five state elections to be held later this year and next spring's general elections—and fear that the popular opposition to Israel's genocidal assault could spin out of control of the political establishment.

In a joint statement issued on Saturday, the Stalinist Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Communist Party of India said India's "shocking" abstention on the UN ceasefire resolution shows the "extent to which Indian foreign policy is being shaped by being a subordinate ally of US imperialism and the Modi government's actions for consolidating the US-Israel-India nexus."

Nevertheless, the Stalinists themselves played a key role in assisting the ruling class in forging the Indo-US alliance, providing support for the Congress-led governments that developed it. Today, they are working to corral the mass opposition to the Modi government behind the INDIA alliance—a bloc of right-wing parties, including the Congress and various ethno-chauvinist and casteist regional bourgeois parties, that is fully committed to both the anti-China Indo-US military-strategic alliance and further pro-investor "reform."



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