

Netanyahu vows Israel “will not stop,” as humanitarian crisis in Gaza worsens

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Hundreds of thousands of civilians remain trapped in the northern Gaza Strip, which Israeli forces have virtually sealed off as part of their genocidal onslaught on the Palestinians. Events over recent days make it increasingly clear that the far-right Netanyahu regime is carrying out a vicious campaign to ethnically cleanse the northern regions of the Gaza Strip, while expanding military operations in the West Bank and on Israel’s northern border with Lebanon.

“The Israeli military offensive has caused the largest mass displacement of Palestinians in such a short period of time since the 1948 Nakba: around 1,500,000 or about 65 percent of Gaza’s population, are now internally displaced inside Gaza,” noted three Palestinian rights groups, Al Mezan, Al-Haq and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, in a statement.

Reports Tuesday revealed that due to a lack of flour and fuel, which Israel has refused to allow into Gaza since its bombardment began, no large bakeries are operating north of the line established by the Israeli military to cut Gaza in two. Under conditions in which bread is one of the main foodstuffs for people who have no electricity or water to cook, this development is tantamount to starving hundreds of thousands who remain confined to Gaza City and surrounding areas.

Conditions further south are little better, where Israeli air strikes continue to pummel densely populated areas indiscriminately. Intense strikes took place on the Al-Shati refugee camp on Tuesday evening, with Israeli troops reportedly gathering on its outskirts.

The Palestinian Red Crescent reports that an average of just 33 aid trucks have crossed into Gaza from Egypt each day since October 21, less than 10 percent of the 500 trucks that entered every day prior to the Israeli onslaught.

The Israel Defence Forces has opened a “humanitarian” corridor to allow Palestinian civilians to move south. However, many have chosen to stay due to the high risk associated with the journey. Men, women and children must walk on foot for at least 5 kilometres (3 miles) along an Israeli-controlled route under constant threat of

bombardment or gunfire before they can obtain transport further south via donkey cart or truck. An Al Jazeera reporter, who spoke to some who successfully completed the treacherous journey, gave a glimpse of the horrendous scene, commenting, “They told us [that] on the way to the south or to the Israeli checkpoint, they could see a lot of bodies, a lot of people cut into pieces ... burning cars, and nobody is [able to reach] these bodies to take them to the hospital or to bury them.”

In the face of this human suffering, statements by leading Israeli government officials emphasized that the ferocious military onslaught will continue and, if anything, be intensified. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel will assume “overall security responsibility” for Gaza for “an indefinite period.” In a television address on Tuesday evening, he asserted that the attack on Gaza has killed “thousands of terrorists, above and below ground,” and vowed, “We will not stop.”

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who described Palestinians last month as “human animals,” took aim at growing calls for a ceasefire, saying, “There will be no humanitarian pauses without [the return of] the hostages.” Israeli troops are “tightening the chokehold” on Gaza, which Gallant described as the “biggest terror base mankind has ever built.”

National Unity leader Benny Gantz, who joined the Netanyahu government when the war began, declared that Israel finds itself in a “multi-front war.” In addition to Gaza, he referred to the northern front with Lebanon, where Israeli air strikes have been stepped up against Hizbollah. He also vaguely spoke of “other areas” where the war is raging, a probable reference to the West Bank, where well over 100 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli troops and gangs of settlers since October 7.

The far-right Israeli regime feels able to proceed with such savagery because its leading figures know they have the unconditional backing of the major imperialist powers. The United States is pledged to supply another \$14 billion of military aid to Israel on top of the tens of billions over recent

years that have helped fund the Zionist state's stockpile of high-powered weaponry now being dropped on defenceless civilians. The Biden administration has deployed two aircraft carrier strike groups with 15,000 military personnel and more recently a nuclear-armed submarine to the region, underscoring its readiness to wage a broader war against regional obstacles to Washington's unchallenged hegemony, above all, Iran. The European powers, including Britain, France and Germany, have been no less forthright in their support for Israel's genocide.

In comments to the media Tuesday, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby rejected placing any restrictions on Israel's bombardment. Asked if it was still the case that the White House had "no red lines" for Israel in the face of the growing civilian death toll, he answered, "That is still the case." He added, referring to the US supply of arms, "We're going to continue to make sure they have the tools and capabilities that they need to defend themselves against what clearly was an existential threat to their society and their people."

In a further indication of the Biden administration's intimate involvement in the Israeli regime's onslaught at the operational level, Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari confirmed that CIA Director William Burns met with Israel's Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi on Tuesday. Ruling out a ceasefire, Hagari insisted, "We are moving forward."

These remarks demonstrate that the Biden administration is a party to Israel's genocide, and its leading personnel, including Biden himself, are war criminals who deserve to appear in the dock alongside Netanyahu.

The carte blanche extended by the imperialists to the Netanyahu regime to do whatever it likes has resulted in acts of collective punishment and other brazen violations of international law not seen since the crimes of the Nazis. Approximately 40 percent of the 10,300 officially recorded casualties in Gaza are children.

On Tuesday, a journalist with the Wafa Palestinian news agency was killed along with 42 members of his family in his home in what appeared to be a targeted killing. Since the war began, 37 media workers have been killed in Israel and Gaza, 31 of them in Gaza. Reporters Without Borders released a statement warning that all journalists continuing to cover events on the ground in Gaza are in "constant, imminent danger of death." In the West Bank, a reporting team for German public broadcaster ARD was held at gun point by Israeli soldiers for close to an hour Sunday.

A Red Cross truck delivering emergency medical supplies to the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City also came under fire Tuesday, lightly wounding a driver. The Israeli military has repeatedly threatened to target Al-Shifa and dropped bombs in its vicinity, claiming without any credible evidence that it

is a cover for a Hamas command centre.

Opposition to the imperialist-backed barbarism of the Israeli government is on the rise among workers and young people around the world. Millions took part in protests on every inhabited continent last weekend, while workers in Barcelona and on the US West Coast have begun to call for the blocking of ships transporting military equipment to the region.

The Israeli regime's ferocious onslaught on Gaza's population also confronts mounting opposition within Israel itself. Tuesday marked one month since the mass Palestinian uprising led by Hamas against 75 years of brutal Israeli oppression, in which some 1,400 Israelis were killed. A vigil held near the Knesset brought together hundreds of relatives of the deceased and those taken as hostages into Gaza by Hamas. The event's organisers blamed the Netanyahu government for October 7 and declared their explicit opposition to the onslaught on Gaza.

"A month has passed and Netanyahu didn't participate in one funeral, didn't come to any shiva, didn't call the families," Maoz Inon, whose parents were killed on October 7, told the crowd. Some of the mourners have pledged to sit outside the Knesset in a mourners' tent in protest against the war until the government falls. "The war will never end as long as Netanyahu is in his office," he added at the protest site. "So I'm crying to the world, 'Don't support Netanyahu. Don't send us weapons. Don't send us ships of war'."

The critical task facing everyone opposed to the genocide against the Palestinians is to turn to the working class. Nothing can be achieved by appealing to the same imperialist powers in the US and Europe backing Israel to the hilt to bring about a ceasefire. What is required is the mobilisation of the working class in a political general strike to stop all military supplies to Israel, supporting the call issued last month by Palestinian trade unions, and halt all production of weaponry and related equipment that is fuelling the slaughter.



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