Israel bombs three hospitals after Biden says “no prospect” of ceasefire

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On Thursday, as he was leaving for a campaign event in Illinois, US President Joe Biden again categorically reiterated his opposition to a ceasefire in Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Asked, “What are the prospects of a Gaza ceasefire?” Biden replied, “None. No possibility.”

Biden’s comments made clear that the United States is actively instigating Israel’s genocide in Gaza and working to inflame a wider war in the Middle East. They came just two days after White House National Security spokesman John Kirby stated again that the United States has no “red lines” on the number of civilian casualties it will accept.

Biden’s remarks sparked worldwide outrage, with clips of his statement viewed or shared by millions of people on all social media platforms. He was met in Chicago by thousands of people demonstrating against US support for Israel’s genocide in Gaza. The crowd chanted, “Genocide Joe” and “Biden, Biden, you can’t hide, we charge you with genocide.”

While Biden was speaking in Illinois, he was interrupted by a protester who yelled, “10,000 Palestinians have been killed. Half of them are children.”

Before Biden left for Chicago, he was asked whether Israel’s “retaliatory airstrikes” were working, he replied, “Yes,” adding, “they’re hitting the targets they’re seeking.”

Just hours after these remarks, the Israel Defense Forces made clear the targets they were “seeking” by bombing three hospitals. Israel bombed the al-Shifa Hospital complex, where tens of thousands are sheltering, with an experimental bladed missile, whose horrifying aftermath was shown in a widely shared video. The missile, believed to be an American Hellfire R9X, carried no explosives but dispersed blades throughout the area, slashing and amputating limbs and leaving pools of blood.

Gaza’s al-Rantisi Children’s Hospital was also attacked, with Dr. Mostafa al-Kahlout telling *Al Jazeera* of a “massive fire” at the hospital, which is sheltering 1,000 refugees. The area surrounding the Indonesian Hospital was struck by 11 missiles, damaging its buildings, the hospital director said.

“Israel is now undertaking these dangerous steps against the hospitals to put them completely out of commission and subsequently displace the people sheltering in them, as well as the patients and medics,” said Ashraf al-Qudra, the spokesman of the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza.

This is the context in which National Security spokesman John Kirby, who is also a retired admiral, announced what he called “humanitarian pauses” in Israel’s non-stop bombing of Gaza. Kirby said, “Israel will begin to implement four-hour pauses in areas of northern Gaza each day, with an announcement to be made three hours beforehand” and create “humanitarian corridors allowing people to flee the areas of hostilities in the northern part of Gaza.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made clear to other world leaders that his plan is to displace the population of Gaza into Egypt’s Sinai Desert. His plans, reported in the *Financial Times*, are consistent with a paper published by Israel’s Intelligence Ministry proposing to expel the population of Gaza.

Under these conditions, what the United States and the entire media are referring to as “humanitarian pauses” and “humanitarian corridors” are simply the means by which the Netanyahu government, with US support, is carrying out the ethnic cleansing of northern Gaza.

In line with this plan, Israel said that 80,000 people

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have left northern Gaza on Thursday, the largest number yet. According to the United Nations, over 557,000 people are sheltering at UN facilities in southern Gaza, and the hospitals cannot accommodate any new arrivals. There is one toilet for every 160 people.

At least 10,812 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in Israeli attacks since October 7, according to the Health Ministry. Over 4,000 of the dead are children. In a statement Thursday, Human Rights Watch wrote:

> Israeli ground forces are encircling and moving deeper into Gaza City, within 2 km of Gaza's largest medical facility, al-Shifa Hospital, where staff are overwhelmed by the number of patients amid a month-long blockade & heavy bombardment.

The statement continued:

> With ongoing strikes and fighting nearby, we are gravely concerned about the well-being of thousands of civilians there, many children among them, seeking medical care and shelter, including people on life support, those who lost limbs in air strikes, and burn victims. ... Hospitals have special protection under the laws of war, which they only lose if they are being used to commit 'acts harmful to the enemy' and after due warning. Evacuation of hospital patients and staff should only be a last resort.

Meanwhile, the US continues to expand the scope of the war raging in the Middle East. For the second time in almost two weeks, the US carried out airstrikes Thursday against what it claimed were forces of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Syria. The strikes were carried out by two Air Force F-15E jets against a weapons warehouse in Deir al Zour Province, Syria. "The United States is fully prepared to take further necessary measures to protect our people and our facilities," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

The United States has surged two aircraft carrier battle groups and an Ohio-class nuclear submarine to the Middle East, in what USNI (United States Naval Institute) news called the "largest mass of US ships in the region in decades."

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