

US and Israeli mass rape propaganda, without credible evidence, is being used to justify Gaza genocide

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The US-Israeli propaganda machine has launched a new argument in defense of Israel's mass slaughter in Gaza: the claim that Hamas, which carried out the October 7 cross-border strike into Israel that preceded the current war, was guilty of mass rape of Israeli women during that uprising.

That there is no direct evidence to support these allegations is irrelevant to the perpetrators and defenders of genocide in Gaza. The claim, suddenly blared out in the media, serves to distract public attention from the catastrophic escalation of Israeli military operations against the population of Gaza since the end of the limited "pause" that accompanied the exchange of hostages held by Hamas for Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

More than 1,000 Palestinians were killed over the weekend by Israeli bombs and missiles. Some 2 million Palestinians have been herded into a tiny corner of Gaza, itself an enclave no larger in area than the cities of Philadelphia or Detroit, but with many more people. The purpose of the Israeli military operations has become increasingly clear: to drive the entire population of Gaza across the Egyptian border into the Sinai Desert, emptying Gaza and making it available for Jewish settlers.

On Monday, coinciding with the full-scale ground assault by the Israel Defense Forces on Khan Younis, the largest city in southern Gaza, a group of 150 wealthy and influential supporters of Israel held a rally at the United Nations headquarters in New York City to promote allegations of mass rape by Hamas. Former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton addressed the group remotely, while billionaire former Facebook executive Sheryl Sandberg also lent her support, along with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (Democrat-NY).

In her pre-recorded statement, Clinton, who as secretary of state in the Obama administration spearheaded the

brutal US-NATO war against Libya, claimed, "It is outrageous that some who claim to stand for justice are closing their eyes and their hearts to the victims of Hamas." She said nothing about the tens of thousands of victims of the US war in Libya, including thousands of women sold into sexual slavery under the rival reactionary juntas that have vied for power since the war. Nor did she make mention of the tens of thousands of victims of Israel's onslaught against Gaza, killed and maimed by US-supplied bombs and missiles.

The event was sponsored by Israel's Permanent Mission to the UN and brought together alleged testimony and documents, all supplied by the Israeli government and the IDF. While a UN commission of inquiry investigating war crimes in Gaza said it would pass on any evidence of sexual violence to the International Criminal Court, the US government does not recognize that court, for fear of prosecution of US war crimes. Israel does not cooperate with it, claiming it has an anti-Israel bias because the ICC has been open to evidence of Israeli war crimes in the occupied West Bank.

The next day, President Joe Biden took up the allegations of rape at a fundraising event in Boston. "Over the past few weeks, survivors and witnesses of the attacks have shared the horrific accounts of unimaginable cruelty," Biden told his millionaire backers gathered at the Westin Hotel. The US president previously dismissed accounts by Palestinian "survivors and witnesses" in Gaza, including those of dozens of medical doctors, of mass casualties from Israeli bombing raids, claiming these were unreliable because they came via Hamas.

That night, NBC News broadcast a five-minute report on the rape charges as the lead item in its "Nightly News," and a media avalanche ensued, with front-page reports in the *New York Times* and the *Washington*

Post and reports on other television networks. As one historian of CIA media operations once termed it, this was the “mighty Wurlitzer” of American government propaganda at full volume.

What is the actual evidence supporting the highly orchestrated barrage of charges against Hamas? All of it comes from the Israeli government and the IDF; none has any independent confirmation; no testimony from victims or eyewitnesses has been produced. According to Israeli officials, the few rape victims who survived the October 7 attack were too traumatized to speak about it. Israeli police chief Yaakov Shabtai told the British Broadcasting Corporation that “many survivors of the attacks were finding it difficult to talk and that he thought some of them would never testify about what they saw or experienced.”

The women hostages released by Hamas last week have been in good physical condition, except for those who were elderly and frail to begin with. None of them reported sexual assaults during captivity. Several of them, however, reported narrowly escaping Israeli bomb and missile strikes, leading Israeli officials to dismiss their recollections as “unreliable.” Thus, only those witnesses who serve the propaganda interests of the Netanyahu government are to be believed.

According to the pro-Palestinian website Mondoweiss, a November 13 Israeli police briefing, supposedly called to provide new evidence about sexual violence, led to a clash between police officials and journalists because of “the absence of new information and clear evidence.” The police chief refused to answer any questions, and the police media officer, Merit Ben Meir, engaged in a heated discussion with journalists during which he made the intended message of the briefing clear, stating: “Based on the circumstances of the bodies, rape occurred, and there’s no room for questioning these events.”

The allegations of mass rape follow the pattern of previous US government “big lies” to manipulate public opinion under conditions of growing mass opposition to imperialist war. The Bush administration claimed the existence of “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq to justify its decision to invade and destroy that country. Obama and Hillary Clinton promoted charges of imminent mass slaughter in Benghazi as the pretext for the US-NATO bombing of Libya. The leaders of countries targeted by US imperialism—Panama’s Noriega, Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, Syria’s Assad and now Russia’s Putin—have invariably

been portrayed in the American media as monsters deserving of the worst.

The rape allegations are being promoted by fascist forces within the Israeli state and taken up by frenzied supporters of imperialist militarism in America. Their sole purpose is to intimidate anyone who would seek to express their heartfelt opposition to Israeli genocide in Gaza. They have no credibility whatever.

And even if it were true that some Hamas fighters committed sexual violence in the course of the October 7 attack, how would this justify the slaughter of thousands of women and children in Gaza by the Israeli military? The claim of mass rape by Hamas is particularly cynical given the unchallenged fact that, as the WSWS declared in an editorial board statement Monday, Israel is engaged in a “war against women and children.”

The claims by Biden, Clinton & Co. to be “horrified” by the events of October 7 likewise have no credibility. Since the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, no country has slaughtered more men, women and children in war than the United States. As for claims of rape, mass rape was an indelible feature of such atrocities as the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. The war in Iraq produced the memorable images of sexual violence at Abu Ghraib, but thousands of such actions, similar or far worse, went unrecorded, except in the memories of the victims, if they survived, and the perpetrators.

The latest effort by the Biden administration and the corporate media to cover up the reality of Israeli genocide in Gaza will prove a dismal failure. It cannot stem the mounting worldwide outrage over the crimes which Israel is committing, acting as the spearhead for American and European imperialism in the Middle East. The central political task of the antiwar movement remains a turn to the international working class, the only social force which can halt the war in Gaza and put an end to the capitalist system which is the source of imperialist war.



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