

Biden admits Israel is carrying out “indiscriminate bombing”: A confession of complicity in war crimes

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On Tuesday, US President Joe Biden made a series of damning admissions regarding the ongoing genocide in Gaza that makes clear the United States is consciously aiding and abetting what it knows to be war crimes by the Israeli government.

At a campaign event, Biden stated that Israel is carrying out “indiscriminate bombing” of the civilian population of Gaza. He subsequently added that Israel’s Minister of National Security “Ben-Gvir and company and the new folks, they... They not only want to have retribution, which they should for what the Palestinians—Hamas—did, but against all Palestinians.”

In other words, Biden admitted that Israel is not making efforts to limit civilian casualties and the reason is that the minister of national security is deliberately seeking to carry out retribution, i.e., collective punishment, against all Palestinian civilians, including unarmed women and children.

The American president has thus admitted to arming, funding and politically supporting the intentional murder of civilian members of a targeted ethnic group—i.e., genocide. Significantly, even in light of these admissions, Biden reiterated that the United States would continue its unconditional funding and arming of the Israeli military, declaring that “in the meantime, none of it is going to walk away from providing Israel what they need to defend themselves and to finish the job.”

Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited by the Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol I of 1977. They constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the perpetrators can be prosecuted and held responsible in international and domestic courts.

Significantly, on multiple occasions, the Biden administration has made clear that the United States has set no limits on the extent to which Israel may target civilians. On November 7, asked whether it is “still the case” that the administration has “no red lines” regarding civilian deaths,

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby replied, “That is still the case.”

Biden’s statements on Tuesday will be “Exhibit A” in any war crimes trial, effectively constituting an admission that the United States is consciously aiding and abetting war crimes by Israel.

In a press briefing Wednesday, Kirby and State Department spokesman Matthew Miller went into damage control mode, attempting to walk back the president’s statements, with Miller effectively declaring that Biden’s admission did not represent the formal position of the US government. “We have not made a formal determination to that question,” Miller said.

Asked by a reporter, “Does the president believe, based on those comments, that Israel’s conduct in this war thus far has been in accordance with international law?” Kirby said the opposite of Biden’s statement that Israel is carrying out “indiscriminate bombing.” He maintained, “we know they’ve stated their intent to reduce civilian casualties. And they have acted on that ... by publishing a map online.”

Another reporter asked, “Biden says yesterday, of course, there were indiscriminate attacks, which to the rest of the world is a war crime.”

To this, Kirby replied, “There is a clear intent by the Israelis and attempt that they have admitted to publicly that they are doing everything they can to reduce civilian casualties.”

He added, “We’re going to continue to support them... They have every right to defend themselves.”

The United Nations’ official definition of genocide notes that there are two elements to the crime of genocide, “a mental element” and “a physical element,” with the physical element being “killing members of the group” or “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.” Israel has killed at least 10,000 Palestinian children and injured tens of thousands more.

But, the UN notes, “The intent is the most difficult

element to determine.” It adds, “To constitute genocide, there must be a proven intent on the part of perpetrators to physically destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.”

But as Craig Mokhiber, former director of the New York office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, explained, the Israeli assault on Gaza is a “textbook case of genocide,” precisely because “explicit statements of intent by leaders in the Israeli government and military leave no room for doubt or debate.”

To cite one of innumerable examples, Giora Eiland, the former head of the Israeli National Security Council, called for the deliberate targeting of Palestinian civilians and the creation of conditions for the spread of “severe epidemics.”

Now, however, the leading funder and arms dealer for the government committing the genocide has explicitly stated that they are “killing members of the group” because they want to target the entire Palestinian population.

Critically, the UN document defining genocide notes, “This means that the target of destruction must be the group, as such, and not its members as individuals.” When Biden admits that the Israeli Defense Ministry is seeking “retribution … against all Palestinians,” he is making clear that Israel is carrying out precisely this critical component of genocide.

Biden made these statements against the backdrop of an overwhelming vote in the United Nations General Assembly calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The United States was among a handful of countries that voted “no.”

But like dozens of non-binding resolutions passed by the United Nations over the course of decades, this resolution will have no direct effect.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller made this perfectly clear in his briefing Wednesday, declaring: “[I]t’s not the first time that Israel has not done well in a vote in the UN; you’ve seen the UN take a number of votes, oftentimes by fairly dramatic margins with respect to Israel, when we have disagreed with the outcome of those votes. So this is not the first time that has happened.”

In other words, the United States is making clear that symbolic votes in the UN General Assembly will do nothing to stop its criminal activities. Israel, for its part, demonstrated open defiance of the vote, launching a series of atrocities Tuesday, including the blowing up of a school operated by UNRWA, the UN refugee agency in Palestine, and flooding underground structures in Gaza with seawater, potentially poisoning the water supply and killing the plant life that sustains agriculture.

In announcing that the US would vote against a ceasefire in Gaza, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said, “Any ceasefire right now would be

temporary at best and dangerous at worst.” She added, “Israel, like every single country on earth, has the right and the responsibility to defend its people from acts of terrorism.”

Workers and youth must draw the lessons of these developments. The imperialist countries that either voted for the ceasefire—including France and Australia—as well as those that abstained, including the UK, Italy and Germany—have all endorsed Israel’s onslaught against Gaza and provided material logistical support for it, with the UK, France and Australia all sending warships to the region so as to threaten Iran not to intervene.

Each and every one of these countries has attempted to criminalize demonstrations against the genocide, seeking to equate opposition to the genocide with antisemitism and support for terrorism.

The Arab states, for their part, have for years enabled Israel’s oppression and mass murder of the Palestinian population in an effort to seek an accommodation with US imperialism.

None of these governments or institutions can be relied on to stop the genocide in Gaza. The basic reality is that the struggle against the genocide in Gaza is a struggle against the governments that are supporting it.

For this reason, stopping the genocide in Gaza requires the mass mobilization of the working class. Workers should support the call by the Palestinian trade unions not to handle war materiel destined for Israel. The global demonstrations by millions of people against the genocide must be expanded and armed with a socialist perspective.

Millions of people have taken part in marches and demonstrations against the genocide. But if this movement is to succeed, it is urgently necessary to fuse the growing movement against war with the struggles of the working class and arm this movement with the socialist perspective of putting an end to the capitalist system that is the root cause of war and imperialist barbarism.



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