

US vows to veto ceasefire resolution as Israel's Rafah onslaught looms

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The US will veto a resolution at the United Nations calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Saturday, in the latest expression of all-out support for Israel's planned assault on Rafah by the Biden administration.

Israeli forces are on the verge of launching a full-scale ground offensive against Rafah, the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip, into which nearly 1.5 million Palestinian civilians are now confined. They have been forcibly displaced by Israel's more than four-month-long campaign of indiscriminate bombing, missile strikes and ground assaults, aimed at driving the Palestinian population out of Gaza.

On Saturday, Algeria called for a vote to be held this week in the UN Security Council on a resolution for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in Gaza.

In a statement, Thomas-Greenfield declared that "the United States does not support action on this draft resolution." She continued: "Should it come up for a vote as drafted, it will not be adopted"—in effect declaring that the US will veto it.

Greenfield added, "The Council has the obligation to ensure that any action we take in the coming days increases pressure on Hamas to accept the proposal on the table." In other words, Greenfield called for an endorsement of Israel's military offensive in order to break the resistance of the Palestinians.

Against the backdrop of condemnation from human rights organizations of Israel's planned assault on Rafah, Thomas-Greenfield said February 10 that the assault on Rafah "cannot proceed." That position was subsequently revised by Biden, who declared that an offensive cannot proceed without a "plan" to relocate Gazan civilians.

Ultimately, US officials indicated that the United States would support the assault on Rafah even if Israel

takes no actions to protect civilians. Asked what will happen if Israel does not take into account "what happens to civilians," White House national security spokesman John Kirby replied, "We will continue to support Israel."

The increasingly naked US support for Israel's genocidal onslaught on Rafah takes place against the background of the ongoing US military intervention throughout the Middle East. On Sunday, the US military announced that it carried out yet another round of strikes on Yemen.

In explaining the US veto, Thomas-Greenfield claimed that the United States was working on mediating an agreement between Israel and Hamas to secure a six-week pause in the fighting.

But the prospect for such an agreement appears non-existent after Israeli officials walked out of discussions last week, referring to calls by Hamas that Israeli forces withdraw from the Gaza Strip as "ludicrous."

In a statement over the weekend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to proceed with the planned assault on Rafah, declaring, "Whoever tells us not to operate in Rafah is telling us to lose the war."

Last week, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Egypt is constructing a walled holding area capable of housing up to 100,000 refugees from Gaza, raising the prospect that Egypt is preparing for Israel to forcibly expel residents of Gaza over the border and into the Sinai Desert.

In addition to providing political support for the genocide, the United States has provided billions of dollars in weapons and logistical support to Israel since October 7, and the Biden administration is supporting the passage of a funding bill that would provide another \$12 billion for the war in Gaza.

Israel is meanwhile continuing its targeting of

hospitals in the Gaza Strip. On Saturday, seven patients at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis died when the hospital was forced to shut off their oxygen due to lack of fuel amid an Israeli blockade. World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the deaths occurred after a team from the WHO was prevented from entering the hospital to deliver fuel for the generators.

“Both yesterday and the day before, the WHO team was not permitted to enter the hospital to assess the conditions of the patients and critical medical needs, despite reaching the hospital compound to deliver fuel alongside partners,” Tedros said. He added, “Medical referral is every patient’s right. The cost of delays will be paid by patients’ lives.”

Nasser Hospital, the second-largest in Gaza, has been rendered “completely out of service,” the Health Ministry said, telling Reuters, “There are only four medical staffers currently caring for patients.”

Israeli strikes continued over the weekend, killing 18 people between Saturday and Sunday. One strike in Rafah killed six people over the weekend, including three children and one woman, while another strike in Khan Younis killed five men.

Gaza’s Health Ministry said Sunday that the official death toll had surged to 28,858, with another 7,000 people missing. Combined, this brings the actual death toll to well over 35,000 people.

The entire population of Gaza, some 2.3 million people, are effectively without sufficient food, fuel and water amid a relentless Israeli bombing campaign and blockade of vital humanitarian supplies.



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