

US imperialism defends Israel as death toll from Gaza City massacre rises to 115

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The death toll from Israel's massacre of Palestinian civilians seeking aid in Gaza City rose Friday to 115 as three further bodies were recovered. With at least 760 injured in the horrific display of sadistic violence by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), US imperialism has continued to support the Israeli regime and its genocide in Gaza.

The mass slaughter occurred early Thursday morning at the Nabulsi roundabout in Gaza City, which has been largely levelled to the ground during the IDF's genocidal onslaught. At around 4:30 a.m., a convoy of aid trucks arrived in Gaza City, prompting large crowds to gather to secure flour and canned food. The hundreds of thousands of Gazans still stranded in Gaza City and surrounding areas of the north of the enclave have gone without aid deliveries for weeks, forcing many to eat grass and animal feed. Fully one quarter of Gaza's population is threatened by famine, and the water supply had dropped to 7 percent of the pre-7 October level by December.

Accounts from eye witnesses and statements from doctors at local hospitals leave no doubt that IDF soldiers shot to kill as many civilians as possible. *Al-Jazeera's* Ismail al-Ghoul, reporting from the scene, said, "After opening fire, Israeli tanks advanced and ran over many of the dead and injured bodies."

According to Dr. Mohammed Salha, acting director of the al-Awda hospital, 176 injured people were brought to his facility, of whom 142 had gunshot wounds. A UN team visiting al-Shifa hospital reported seeing "a large number of gunshot wounds" among patients. Other sources reported that the majority of the dead succumbed to shots in the torso or head, while the remainder were crushed to death in the ensuing stampede.

In a clear sign of a cover-up, Israel's version of events shifted dramatically throughout Thursday. Authorities initially spoke of a stampede in which Palestinians were crushed to death as they sought to access the food aid. However, when it became impossible to deny that Israeli soldiers had opened fire indiscriminately, IDF spokesmen asserted that the soldiers did so because they felt threatened by the "mob." The most cynical of all the justifications was provided by rear admiral Daniel Hagari, who told the media, "No IDF strike was conducted toward the aid convoy. On the contrary, the IDF was there carrying out a humanitarian aid operation, to secure the humanitarian aid corridor, and allow the convoy to reach its

distribution point, so that the humanitarian aid could reach Gazan civilians in the north who are in need."

Israeli officials feel they can lie so brazenly because they continue to enjoy the support of their most important backer, American imperialism. Despite a hypocritical statement from the White House declaring that Thursday's events were "tremendously alarming," the reality is that the Palestinians were likely massacred with weapons supplied by the United States.

At a Thursday evening emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, the US voted to block a draft statement prepared by Algeria that noted "deep concern" at the deaths "due to opening fire from Israel." According to Palestinian UN ambassador Riyad Mansour, 14 of the Security Council's 15 members were prepared to back the statement. Speaking to reporters afterwards, US deputy UN ambassador Robert Wood declared, "The problem is that we don't have all the facts here."

This outrageous attempt at obfuscation was echoed in many of the international media accounts on the massacre, which sought to absolve Israel of culpability. *The Guardian* spoke of "a lack of clarity about the facts," while the Tagesschau on German public broadcaster ARD described what happened Thursday as "unclear" and "chaos." The *New York Times* reported, "Questions still surround the convoy disaster," and described the Palestinians as having been killed in a "melee surrounding an aid convoy."

On Friday, US President Joe Biden pledged to organise air drops of aid into northern Gaza. Even the *Times* was compelled to note the largely symbolic character of this gesture, since a transporter plane can carry only a tiny fraction of the aid that could be delivered in a single truck. Aid experts have pointed out that there is enough aid on Gaza's borders to feed the entire population, but it is being prevented from entering by the Israeli government.

Representatives of the imperialist powers called upon Israel to conduct an investigation into the massacre. Politely asking the murderer to examine the crime scene, German Foreign Minister Analena Baerbock, whose government has increased its arms supplies to Israel many times over since the genocide began, wrote on X, "The Israeli army must fully explain how

the mass panic and shooting could have happened.”

This pathetic appeal was echoed by US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, who commented Thursday, “We have been in touch with the Israeli government since early this morning and understand that an investigation is underway. We will be monitoring that investigation closely and pressing for answers.”

The “answers” and “explanations” for Thursday’s massacre are plain for all to see, though Baerbock and her American colleagues would rather keep silent about them. Israel is waging a genocide against the Palestinian people, aimed at killing as many as possible and driving the remainder out of Gaza so that the territory falls under its permanent control.

On the same day as the Gaza City massacre, the Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed that the official death toll in Gaza since October 7 has surpassed 30,000, among whom women and children make up the vast majority. The comment early on in the onslaught by Defence Minister Yoav Gallant that Israel is fighting “human animals” underscored from the onset that for the Israeli government and military establishment, Palestinians are subhuman.

Numerous Israeli government officials have explicitly called for the expulsion of the Palestinians and vowed that those who fled their homes in the north of Gaza would not be able to return. They have also openly urged that food aid be used as a weapon of war to starve the population, and ensured that aid deliveries to Gaza are kept at a fraction of what they were prior to the launch of the bombardment. Israel therefore bears responsibility for every single death Thursday, irrespective of whether it resulted from gunshot wounds, the stampede or the aid trucks.

The massacrings of innocent civilians by Israel has occurred with shocking regularity over the past five months. In October, Israel deliberately targeted the al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, killing upwards of 500 people. As in Thursday’s massacre, Israel, its US imperialist enabler, and the corporate-controlled media sought to conceal Israel’s war crime by blaming the carnage on a wayward Palestinian rocket.

Statements from French President Emmanuel Macron, the Spanish government and several Arab regimes were somewhat sharper in their language and managed to include calls for an “independent investigation” into the Gaza City massacre.

Macron said:

Deep indignation at the images coming from Gaza, where civilians have been targeted by Israeli soldiers. I express my strongest condemnation of these shootings and call for truth, justice and respect for international law. The situation in Gaza is terrible. All civilian populations must be protected. A ceasefire must be implemented immediately to allow humanitarian aid to be distributed.

Thursday’s massacre underlines the bankruptcy of appeals like Macron’s, directed as they are to the “international community,” i.e., the imperialist powers, to impose a ceasefire in a barbaric onslaught in which they are all thoroughly complicit. In January, compelling evidence was presented to the International Court of Justice demonstrating Israel’s perpetration of a genocide in Gaza. According to an interim ruling, Israel was supposed to take steps within a month to protect civilian lives and report back on its progress. Nothing of the sort has happened. With the all-out support of the imperialist powers, the IDF has continued and even intensified its genocide. The IDF is preparing before the eyes of the world a ground invasion of Rafah, where some 1.5 million desperate civilians are crammed together.

The millions of workers and young people who have taken to the streets around the world over recent months to express their outrage over and opposition to Israel’s imperialist-backed genocide against the Palestinians should place no confidence in calls by Macron, or any other representative of the imperialist or regional powers, for a “ceasefire.”

The only way to hold Israel and its imperialist backers accountable for the horrific crimes they have committed in Gaza is through the political mobilisation of the international working class to stop the Gaza genocide by putting an end to the crisis-ridden capitalist system that is its source. This necessitates the fight to build an international anti-war movement that fuses the mass protests with the struggles of workers in all the imperialist centres against the deterioration of their living standards, on the basis of a socialist and internationalist programme.



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