

Israel vows “response” to Iranian strikes, as Gaza genocide continues

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Forty-eight hours after Iran launched an airstrike on Israel, Israeli officials offered indications Monday that Israel is preparing military strikes on Iranian targets, as the US-provoked war in the Middle East continued to escalate.?

“This launch of so many missiles, cruise missiles, and UAVs into the territory of the State of Israel will be met with a response,” Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi said on Monday.

NBC News ran a headline by its chief foreign correspondent Raf Sanchez entitled, “Israel’s response to the Iranian attack may be ‘imminent,’ official says,” stating that “Any response will be coordinated with the Americans.”

And David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* reported in an op-ed Monday that “Israeli officials have concluded that to deter Iran, they should retaliate for this weekend’s massive missile barrage.”

For their part, US officials repeatedly and categorically refused to preclude or oppose an Israeli strike on Iran. Speaking during the White House daily briefing Monday, White House spokesman John Kirby declared, “This is an Israeli decision to make, whether and how they’ll respond to what Iran did on Saturday and we’re going to leave it squarely with them.”

Asked by a reporter whether Iran “can defy the US without facing any consequences,” Kirby replied with a threat, “If I’m sitting in Tehran, and I’m taking a look at what just happened on Saturday night, I don’t think I’d be betting that the United States is not willing to get engaged here and help defend Israel.”

He continued, “I mean, you had American fighter pilots in the air in combat operation, shooting down drones and missiles that were heading towards Israel, as well as US Navy destroyers at sea, knocking them

down from there. So the message should be very clear to anybody. When the President says we’re going to take our commitments to the region seriously, when we’re going to help Israel defend itself... we will do what we have to do to defend Israel.”

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken likewise vowed US’s unconditional support for Israel during a meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Tamim. He declared, “We’ll continue to support the defense of Israel and to protect our personnel in the region.” He added, “What this weekend demonstrated is that Israel did not have to and does not have to defend itself alone when it is the victim of an aggression, the victim of an attack.”

Iran’s strike on Israel was provoked by an April 1 attack on an Iranian embassy in Syria that killed seven high-level Iranian military leaders. While claiming it did not have advanced knowledge of the strike, the United States defended Israel’s attack, claiming the embassy was a terrorist compound and vetoing a UN Security Council resolution that would have condemned the Israeli attack.

The Iranian strike on Israel created the conditions for the United States and its imperialist allies to affirm their unequivocal backing of Israel’s continued genocide against the population of Gaza.

In its daily report on Gaza, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) wrote, “Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.”

Over the weekend, 163 Palestinians in Gaza were killed, according to Gaza’s Ministry of Health, amid systematic bombardment of refugee camps throughout

the Gaza Strip. The official death toll of the Gaza genocide reached 33,797 Monday, according to the Ministry of Health, with another 76,465 people wounded. When the thousands buried underneath the rubble are added to the death toll, the figure is greater than 40,000.

Israel's promised invasion of Rafah would see mass killing on an even greater scale. In a briefing on Friday, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Palestine Jamie McGoldrick warned that about 800,000 people may be forced to evacuate if the Israeli military launches a ground incursion into Rafah. He pointed to the systematic obstruction of the delivery of food aid to Gaza, declaring, "If we don't have the chance to expand the delivery of aid in all parts of Gaza, but in particular to the north, then we're going to face a catastrophe."

Israel is proceeding with its efforts to completely clear a one-kilometer wide stretch around Gaza along the Israeli border. The UN noted that 4,000 buildings within one kilometer of the Israeli border—90 percent of the total—have been either destroyed or damaged.

Meanwhile, more mass graves continue to be discovered as evidence of the massacre committed by the IDF at Al-Shifa Hospital last month. On Monday, Palestinian doctors said they discovered at least 10 bodies in a mass grave near the hospital, who "still had medical bandages and catheters attached to their bodies," according to Al Jazeera. The publication reported that "Medical staff inside the hospital confirmed that these people were, in fact, executed by the Israeli military very close to the main gate of al-Shifa Hospital when it was stormed in March."



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