

Israel strikes Iran as US and EU impose a new round of sanctions

Andre Damon
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Israel carried out an airstrike on Iran Friday morning, a US official told major US news outlets. Iranian state TV reported that three drones were shot down over the Isfahan air base.

The move came just hours after the United States and its European allies on Thursday announced a new round of sanctions targeting Iran, deepening their participation in a spiraling war in the Middle East.

In a statement announcing the sanctions, US President Joe Biden declared, “I’ve directed my team, including the Department of the Treasury, to continue to impose sanctions that further degrade Iran’s military industries.” He continued, “Let it be clear to all those who enable or support Iran’s attacks: The United States is committed to Israel’s security.”

The same day, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced a new round of sanctions targeting Iran. Biden and Sunak were joined by the European Council, which declared that sanctions would be imposed in order to “isolate Iran.”

The sanctions come after days of declarations by Israeli officials that they intend to carry out an attack on Iran following Tehran’s retaliatory strikes on Israel over the weekend. On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel will “do everything necessary to defend itself” and that “we will make our own decisions” with regard to attacking Iran.

This statement came one day after UK Foreign Minister David Cameron, following a meeting with Iranian officials, said, “It’s clear the Israelis are making a decision to act.”

Meanwhile, Iranian officials vowed that any strike by Israel would be met with overwhelming force, with Iranian Maj. Gen. Ahmad Haghtalab warning that “the hands are on the trigger” to retaliate against Israel’s

nuclear sites.

In an interview with CNN, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian declared, “In case the Israeli regime embarks on adventurism again and takes action against the interests of Iran, the next response from us will be immediate and at a maximum level.”

The Middle East is poised on the knife-edge of full-scale war. In an address to the UN Security Council, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned, “One miscalculation, one miscommunication, one mistake could lead to the unthinkable: a full-scale regional conflict that would be devastating for all involved and the rest of the world.”

In a further endorsement of Israel’s genocide in Gaza and its military escalation against Iran, the United States vetoed a resolution in the UN Security Council to make Palestine a full member-state of the United Nations.

Absurdly, the US carried out this action while proclaiming its support for a so-called “two-state solution.” In a statement, US Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood said, “The United States will continue to oppose unilateral measures that undermine the prospect of a two-state solution. This includes any actions that violate the principles that Secretary Blinken has emphasized for months, that Gaza cannot be a platform for terrorism.”

In a statement in response, the Palestinian presidency rebuked the US action, which it described as “unfair, immoral and unjustified.” The statement read, “This aggressive American veto reveals the contradictions of American policy, which claims, on the one hand, to support the two-state solution, while it prevents the international institution from implementing this solution through its repeated use of the veto in the Security Council against Palestine and its legitimate

rights.”

Ziad Abu Amr, special envoy of the Palestinian presidency, asked, “How could this damage the prospects of peace between Palestinians and Israelis? How could this recognition and this membership harm international peace and security?”

The Biden administration is increasingly framing its escalating conflict with Iran as part of a globe-spanning war targeting Russia and China. In an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, Biden drew an equivalence between the US conflicts with Russia and China, claiming, “Both Ukraine and Israel defended themselves against these attacks, holding the line and protecting their citizens. And both did it with critical help from the U.S.”

He continued, “But while both countries can capably defend their own sovereignty, they depend on American assistance, including weaponry, to do it. And this is a pivotal moment.”

He declared, “Vladimir Putin is ramping up his onslaught with help from his friends. China is providing Russia with microelectronics and other equipment that is critical for defense production. Iran is sending hundreds of drones; North Korea is providing artillery and ballistic missiles.”

He concluded with a threat: “ ‘An attack on one is an attack on all’ means that if Mr. Putin invades a NATO ally, we will come to its aid—as our NATO allies did for us after the Sept. 11 attacks.”

This conception forms the rationale for the US support for the Gaza genocide, which it sees as a critical element of its effort to dominate the Middle East. Amid mass starvation and continuous bombing, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains disastrous.

In a statement, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, “In Gaza, six and a half months of Israeli military operations have created a humanitarian hellscape. Tens of thousands of people have been killed. Two million Palestinians have endured death, destruction, and the denial of lifesaving humanitarian aid; they are now staring down on starvation. An Israeli operation in Rafah would compound this humanitarian catastrophe.”

He continued, “The casualty figures are overwhelming and unprecedented in speed and scale during my time as Secretary-General. According to UNICEF, more than 13,900 Palestinian children have reportedly been killed in intense, often indiscriminate

attacks.”

Under these conditions, there are indications that the United States is moving toward an open endorsement of Israel’s planned assault on Rafah.

On Thursday, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Israeli officials to discuss the Rafah attack. The official readout of the meeting noted: “The two sides agreed on the shared objective to see Hamas defeated in Rafah. U.S. participants expressed concerns with various courses of action in Rafah, and Israeli participants agreed to take these concerns into account.”

In a press briefing Thursday, Pentagon spokesperson Pat Ryder declared, “We understand the need for Israel to go after Hamas and to eliminate or defeat Hamas as a threat.”

Meanwhile, the death toll of the Gaza genocide has reached 33,970, with 76,770 more wounded, according to the latest figures from Gaza’s Health Ministry.



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