

Biden pledges \$1 billion in additional military aid, as new report accuses Israel of genocide in Gaza

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The Biden administration intends to dispatch more than \$1 billion of military equipment to Israel so that it can continue the genocide against the Palestinians. The military package will include \$700 million for tank ammunition, \$500 million in tactical vehicles and \$60 million for mortar shells. Its unveiling coincided with UN figures showing that 600,000 people, or more than a quarter of Gaza's total population, have fled Rafah since Israel's ground operation began on May 6.

The UN noted that 150,000 people have fled Gaza's southernmost city in the past 48 hours. Evacuation orders have also been issued by Israel for around 100,000 residents in northern Gaza. At least 10 Palestinians were killed in Gaza City on Wednesday in an attack on a group of people trying to use a public internet connection. In the city's Sabra neighbourhood, a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) hospital was the target of an air strike, killing at least 10 displaced people.

Most of those fleeing Rafah have fled many times before in the past seven months. They lack not only access to food, water and medical treatment, but also almost all civil infrastructure to support human life. The UN Development Programme estimates that 270,000 tons of solid waste have accumulated in temporary dumps throughout Gaza because the means to dispose of it have been destroyed by Israel's onslaught.

The UN wrote in its May 15 flash update:

Rising temperatures are exacerbating the impact solid waste accumulation is having on people, such as generating insects and attracting wild animals, which is particularly severe at IDP sites. UNDP warns: "If the issue of solid waste, including medical waste, is not adequately addressed and resolved, it will exacerbate the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip ... and severely impact public health, particularly with limited access to healthcare services."

According to OXFAM, the "lethal cocktail" of overcrowding,

waste and sewage accumulation, malnutrition and heat is creating ideal conditions for the spread of infectious diseases like cholera.

Amid this human misery, the Biden administration's military package would aim to replenish the weaponry used by Israel since its onslaught began and could take years to complete, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The Biden administration has been by far Israel's largest supplier of high-powered bombs, which have been used to flatten entire neighbourhoods, and other military equipment.

As part of a supplemental military spending package adopted late last month, Washington set aside some \$26 billion to support Israel's military. In comments made last week as the long-planned onslaught on Rafah began, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby insisted that every dollar would be spent.

The uninterrupted flow of weaponry from the US to Israel underscores Washington's responsibility for the Gaza genocide. As the official death toll since October 7 rises to over 35,200 Palestinians—with well over 40,000 dead when those unaccounted for under the rubble are taken into account, the vast majority being women and children—Washington's response is to double down on its support for the far-right Zionist regime and accelerate the shipment of arms.

There is only one place suitable for the individuals responsible for such inhuman decisions: the defendants' bench of a war crimes tribunal.

This was underscored in a report released by the University Network for Human Rights Wednesday accusing Israel of genocide in the Gaza Strip. The Network consists of leading law schools at universities in the United States and South Africa, including Yale, Cornell, Boston University and the University of Pretoria.

The report declares in its executive summary:

[W]e conclude that Israel's actions in and regarding Gaza since October 7, 2023 violate the Genocide Convention. Specifically, Israel has committed

genocidal acts of killing, causing serious harm to, and inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, a protected group that forms a substantial part of the Palestinian people.

The report notes that the total number of Palestinians killed or wounded between October 7 and May 1—34,568 and 77,765, respectively—accounts for more than 5 percent of Gaza’s population. Two percent of children in Gaza have either been killed or injured. Israel killed more children during the first four months of its bloody onslaught than all of the child deaths in all of the world’s conflicts over the past four years.

The report continues:

Israel’s genocidal acts in Gaza have been motivated by the requisite genocidal intent, as evidenced in this report by the statements of Israeli leaders, the character of the State and its military forces’ conduct against and relating to Palestinians in Gaza, and the direct nexus between them. As this report details,¹³ officials at all levels of Israeli government, up to and including the Prime Minister, have made remarks that not only express blatant and unequivocal dehumanization and cruelty against Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere, but also explicitly reflect intentions to destroy and exterminate Palestinians as such. The patterns of conduct of Israeli military forces in Gaza further reinforce the finding of Israel’s genocidal intent.

The report explains that its findings will strengthen the cases at the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of genocide and in US federal court against the Biden administration. The authors write:

Israel’s violations of the international legal prohibition of genocide amount to grave breaches of preemptory norms of international law that must cease immediately. These violations also give rise to obligations by all other States: to refrain from recognizing Israel’s breaches as legal or taking any actions that may constitute complicity in these breaches; and to take positive steps to suppress, prevent, and punish the commission by Israel of further genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

These appeals have fallen and will continue to fall on deaf ears. US imperialism and its allies in Canada and Europe are up

to their necks in the blood of Gaza’s Palestinians.

The only steps these governments take to suppress, prevent and punish are against the opponents of the genocide, who face the full force of the repressive state apparatus as police tear down protest camps and carry out mass arrests, amid a vicious smear campaign slandering them as “antisemites.”

Over 3,000 anti-genocide protesters have been detained in the US over recent weeks, while in Germany opponents of the Israeli regime’s crimes have been barred from entering the country and speaking at public events. The Palestine Congress in Berlin, where eye-witness accounts of the devastation in Gaza were to be heard, and encampments outside the Bundestag and at the Free University and Humboldt University in Berlin, were violently dispersed in state-orchestrated police raids.

The University Network for Human Rights’ report was released on May 15, which Palestinians commemorate each year as Nakba Day. The expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians from their homes in a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing that led to the founding of Israel on May 14, 1948, with the backing of the imperialist powers, was one of the 20th century’s great crimes.

It is a measure of the barbarism of Israel and its imperialist backers in Gaza that the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, author of *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, could state in an interview with *Al Jazeera* that the Western powers’ enabling of the Gaza genocide is “even worse” than the role they played in 1948.

Pappé said:

At the time in 1948, there was no television. People did not have smartphones, and it was relatively easy to cover up the Nakba, the ethnic cleansing, and to claim that it didn’t exist. It is impossible to say now that people cannot know what is going on when it appears on our screens. So I think the level of denial today is far more sinister, far more outrageous...

Remarking that massacres were used by the Zionists in 1948 to force Palestinians out of areas claimed for an Israeli state, he added, “What we see now are massacres which are part of the genocidal impulse, namely to kill people in order to downsize the number of people living in Gaza.”



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