

Washington abandons aid to Gaza via floating pier, as famine intensifies

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The US military announced Thursday that the floating pier, aimed ostensibly at delivering aid to Gaza's starving population, will be dismantled. The official end of this two-month farce graphically exposes the complicity of American imperialism in Israel's genocide against the Palestinians, which has claimed an estimated 186,000 lives, and will claim many more in the coming weeks and months due to malnutrition.

Since the floating pier was installed and declared operational on May 16, just 8,500 tons of aid have been delivered via the route. This equates to about 420 truckloads of aid. Announced with great fanfare by President Joe Biden in March, the pier ended up taking two months to deliver 80 percent of the 500 truckloads of aid that arrived in Gaza each day prior to the launching of Israel's genocidal onslaught on October 7.

The pier was only in service for 25 days during its two-month presence off the Gaza coast due to bad weather and repeated repairs. The total cost of the operation was \$230 million.

With breathtaking cynicism, Deputy Commander of US Central Command Brad Cooper asserted during his announcement of the end of the pier that it was "mission accomplished." Perhaps he revealed more than he intended. The remark underscores how Washington was never concerned about averting a famine that was already imminent in March, when Biden presented the plan for the pier. Rather, the goal was to make a token gesture to widespread anger over the imperialist powers' involvement in the genocide.

From the outset, aid organisations denounced the ineffectual approach of maritime aid deliveries. A statement was signed by 25 non-governmental organisations in March criticising the use of air drops and maritime deliveries by states "to create the illusion that they are doing enough to support the needs in

Gaza."

If US imperialism and its European allies were genuinely concerned about the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding before the world's eyes in Gaza, they could have demanded Israel fully open land crossings into Gaza and guarantee the unhindered access of aid workers. What's more, they could have forced this measure by halting their uninterrupted supply of high-powered weaponry to Israel, without which the Zionist regime could not continue its genocidal onslaught. But American imperialism is incapable of such actions, because it backs the genocide to the hilt as a demonstration of the ruthless measures it is prepared to employ in the rapidly emerging world war between the major powers.

The flow of 2,000-pound bombs, one of which can destroy an entire city block, has continued unabated. The Biden administration has supplied some 14,000 of these weapons of mass murder since Israel's bombardment began.

Since Biden announced the deployment of the pier, Israel has continued to deliberately target aid workers and hit facilities run by the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the main agency responsible for the delivery of aid. On April 1, the Israel Defence Forces bombed two vehicles carrying aid workers from World Central Kitchen, killing seven. Despite compelling evidence showing that Israel's strike was deliberate, no calls came from the United States or any other imperialist power for an independent investigation or unimpeded access to Gaza for aid workers.

On May 6, just under two weeks before the pier went into operation, the IDF began its long-planned onslaught on Rafah, closing the two main border crossings for aid deliveries into the enclave. The

offensive drove upwards of a million people out of Gaza's southernmost city and reduced aid deliveries to a trickle, further compounding the already horrendous food crisis.

In a July 9 briefing, UN special rapporteurs declared that famine had spread throughout the Gaza Strip. "We declare that Israel's intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people is a form of genocidal violence and has resulted in famine across all of Gaza," they explained in their statement. "We call upon the international community to prioritise the delivery of humanitarian aid by land by any means necessary, end Israel's siege, and establish a ceasefire. ... Thirty-four Palestinians have died from malnutrition since 7 October, the majority being children. Inaction is complicity."

On July 12, an Israeli air strike in a supposed "safe zone" west of Khan Younis killed four aid workers from the Al-Khair organisation. A day later, 92 people were killed by an IDF strike on a camp in the al-Mawasi "safe zone." UNRWA's Gaza headquarters was "flattened" on July 15 in another strike, according to UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini.

It has become virtually impossible to move aid inside Gaza due to ongoing bombardments and the deliberate targeting of aid workers. Speaking to Ireland's *The Journal*, Maher Haboush from Gaza City explained that he and his family have been displaced 10 times since Israel's bombardment began. "I lost 16 kilos before the war; this is famine, and now a new level has started. When I go to the market, I can't find items to feed my children," he said.

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths warned that 1 million Gazans, about half the population, would face the threat of starvation and death by the middle of July. Waiting until famine is officially declared before taking action "would be a death sentence for hundreds of thousands of people and a moral outrage," he added.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, created by the UN, declares a famine when 20 percent of households have an extreme lack of food, 30 percent of children have acute malnutrition, and at least two adults or four children per 10,000 people die daily.

Disease is also on the rise. A report from Gaza's health ministry Thursday confirmed the presence of polio in waste samples from Gaza. An Oxfam report

stated that Israel has reduced water supplies to Gaza by 94 percent, producing "a deadly health catastrophe." The level of water available in Gaza is "less than a single toilet flush" per day per person, the report added. The report pointed out that Israel has destroyed or damaged five water sanitation sites every three days since October 7, reducing water production in Gaza by 84 percent. The IDF has also destroyed 70 percent of water sewage pumps and all waste water treatment plants.

US imperialism views the inhuman crimes perpetrated by the Zionist regime as a price worth paying to advance its geopolitical interests in the region against Iran. Washington views the Gaza genocide as a key component in this strategy, which is aimed at consolidating American imperialist hegemony over the energy-rich Middle East. It has sanctioned a vast intensification of Israeli strikes into southern Lebanon to kill several leading commanders of Iranian-backed Hezbollah and will back an all-out war by Israel in Lebanon to the hilt.

Israel's Prime Minister and war criminal-in-chief Benjamin Netanyahu is due in Washington next Wednesday, when he will deliver a progress report to Congress on the implementation of the genocide. He is scheduled to meet with Biden, and sources Thursday indicated that attempts are being made to arrange a meeting with the fascist ex-President Donald Trump, the current front runner in the US election. Amid rampant starvation and the spread of disease in Gaza, Netanyahu's visit clearly expresses the complicity of the entire American political establishment in the genocide against the Palestinians.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and Socialist Equality Party are organizing a demonstration in Washington on July 24, not to appeal to the war criminals but to lay the basis for the building of an international anti-war movement led by the working class. This is the only way to stop the genocide and the rapidly evolving third imperialist world war.



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