

Bill Clinton defends mass murder of civilians in Gaza genocide

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31 October 2024

Speaking in Michigan on Monday, former President Bill Clinton justified the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza, openly advocating the targeting of civilians and collective punishment against non-combatants, both of which are war crimes.

“Arab Americans in Michigan think too many people have died,” Clinton said. “People who criticize it are essentially saying ... look how many people you’ve killed in retaliation. So how many is enough for you to kill to punish them for the terrible things they did?”

To this, Clinton replied, “What would you do if ... one day they come for you and slaughtered the people in your village, you would say ... I’m not keeping score that way. ... It isn’t how many we’ve had to kill.”

Clinton spoke as the Netanyahu government adopted and implemented a plan to systematically starve the population of Gaza, ethnically cleanse the entirety of northern Gaza and massacre everyone who remains. According to official figures, over 43,000 people in Gaza have been killed by Israel since October 7, including 13,000 children, and virtually the entire population has been turned into homeless, starving refugees.

Clinton’s defense of the Israeli genocide flagrantly violates both criminal and international law, neither of which allows “revenge” as the justification for the murder of unarmed people.

In criminal law, if someone commits a murder in revenge, he will still be prosecuted for murder. The same holds true for international law. In words that seem like a rebuttal to Clinton, the UN commission of inquiry into the war in Gaza declared last month, “The collective punishment of the entire population for the actions of a few” is “a clear violation of IHL [International Humanitarian Law].”

The law of “revenge” was, in fact, the policy pursued by Nazi Germany during World War II in response to acts of resistance against its brutal occupation of Europe. After the assassination of leading Nazi Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazis indiscriminately massacred civilians in the Czech village of Lidice. Following a bomb attack on German auxiliary police

units in Rome in March 1944, the Nazi occupiers ordered a ratio of 10 civilian deaths for every policeman killed. In what became known as the Ardeatine Caves massacre, they executed 335 Italian civilians, none of whom had any connection with the attack.

Continuing his open defense of Israeli war crimes, Clinton declared the numbers of Gaza civilians killed is irrelevant “because Hamas makes sure that they’re shielded by civilians.” He continued, “They’ll force you to kill civilians if you want to defend yourself.”

First, Israel has no right to “defend” itself against the population of Palestine, whose land it has illegally occupied in Gaza since 1967. As International Court of Justice Judge Navanethem Pillay declared at a press conference the same day as Clinton spoke, “You have to distinguish” between Israel and Palestine, because “one is an occupier and the other occupied.”

Gaza is one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world, into which Israel has dropped the equivalent of multiple nuclear bombs worth of ordnance over the past year. The Netanyahu government has overwhelmingly used massive 2,000-pound bombs in leveling Gaza because maximizing, not minimizing, the death toll is its aim, in line with its strategy of ethnically cleansing Palestine and incorporating it into “greater Israel.”

In defending the massacre of the Palestinian people and the Israeli aim of illegally annexing the territory of Palestine, Clinton invoked the Biblical myth of King David. Addressing the Palestinian people, Clinton declared:

Well, I got news for them. They [the Israelis] were there first before their faith [Islam] existed. They were there in the time of King David, the southernmost tribes had Judea and Samaria.

First, there is no archeological evidence that a king named David ever ruled in the Levant, much less that his supposed

kingdom included the territory of what is now called the West Bank. But what may or may not have happened in the Bronze Age has precisely zero bearing on contemporary international law, whose highest body, the International Court of Justice, ruled categorically this year that Israel has no right whatsoever to the West Bank or any other part of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel's ability to conduct the genocide is due above all to the unconditional support it enjoys from American imperialism. Washington views the "final solution" of the Palestinian question as a critical component of its preparation for a region-wide war targeting Iran, which moved one step closer last week with Israel's US-backed missile strike on Tehran. The planned Middle East-wide war is one front in American imperialism's pursuit of world war, including against Russia in Eastern Europe and China in the Asia-Pacific, to consolidate its global hegemony against its rivals and nominal allies.

War and genocide enjoy bipartisan support within the US political establishment. The fact that Clinton provided such an explicit defence of the genocide of the Palestinians proves this and reveals how far to the right the entire political establishment has moved.

Clinton has been throughout his career a bitter enemy of the Palestinian people. His open advocacy of the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestine recalls the fact that he negotiated with Palestinian leaders entirely in bad faith throughout his presidency. In fact, the negotiations at Camp David in 2000 only paved the way for a quarter-century of Israeli murder and oppression, capped by what is now unfolding as the "final solution" of the Palestinian question.

His defense of genocide is the authentic voice of American imperialism, which has supplied Netanyahu, Gallant and the Israel Defense Forces with tens of billions of dollars in high-powered weaponry to slaughter men, women and children for more than a year. While Trump openly declares his intention to erect a fascist dictatorship if he wins the election on November 5, Harris and the Democrats ignore this threat so as to avoid mobilizing popular opposition against him, while at the same time endorsing the fascist extermination of the Palestinians.

Harris responded to Netanyahu's thuggish defence of the genocide in his July speech to a joint session of Congress by holding a one-on-one meeting with the Israeli prime minister. Addressing the media afterwards, she vowed that Washington would supply Jerusalem with the military equipment it needs to fight Iran and Iranian-backed militias, including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. On the campaign trail, Harris has taken to underlining this pledge with the declaration that her main goal in the White House will be to ensure that the US maintains "the most lethal

military force in the world."

The bourgeoisie's endorsement of fascistic violence in pursuit of its economic and geostrategic interests is not limited to the United States. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock told the Bundestag in October,

When Hamas terrorists hide behind people, behind schools, then we end up in very difficult waters. But we're not shying away from this. This is why I made it clear at the United Nations that civilian sites could lose their protected status if terrorists abuse this status. That's what Germany stands for—and that's what we mean when we refer to Israel's security.

The resurgence of capitalist barbarism not seen since the first half of the twentieth century is linked to the eruption of a new redivision of the world between the imperialist powers. All of the red lines that supposedly separated ostensibly democratic regimes from the fascist dictatorships of the past have been obliterated in the struggle for raw materials, markets, and geopolitical influence. This struggle is driven by the irreconcilable contradictions of world capitalism, between the nation-state and global production, and the private ownership of the means of production and the mass, social character of the productive process.

The Gaza genocide has exposed the leaders of every imperialist country as a pack of war criminals. But their criminality expresses the bankruptcy and decay of the entire capitalist social order, which is the ultimate cause of imperialist war and social barbarism.



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