

# Vice President-elect JD Vance pledges to “knock out” Gaza

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Eight days before the Trump administration is set to take power, US Vice President-elect JD Vance pledged to deepen support for the Gaza genocide in an interview with ABC’s *This Week* Sunday talk show.

Vance vowed to enable “the Israelis to knock out the final couple of battalions of Hamas and their leadership” unless Hamas surrendered to the illegal Israeli occupation of Gaza.

Vance was expanding upon the content of last week’s press briefing by US President-elect Donald Trump, who declared on Tuesday that “if those hostages aren’t back ... by the time I get into office, all hell will break out in the Middle East, and it will not be good for Hamas.”

In his press briefing, Trump refused to rule out a massive strike on Iran, which the *Wall Street Journal* reported the Trump administration was actively discussing.

The statements by Trump, and now Vance, make clear that the incoming Trump administration is planning a massive military escalation throughout the Middle East, which will further intensify the Gaza genocide and broader war throughout the Middle East launched under the Biden administration.

To date, 46,000 people have been killed by the Israeli onslaught on Gaza, according to official data from Gaza’s Ministry of Health.

But even this horrific death toll is likely to be a significant underestimate. In a study this week by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and published in the *Lancet*, there were an estimated 64,260 “traumatic injury deaths” in Gaza between October 7, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

This means that the figures published by Gaza’s health ministry actually underestimate the death toll from Israeli violence by 41 percent.

Through October, the number of violent deaths likely exceeds 70,000, or 3 percent of the prewar population.

According to the LSHTM study, 59 percent of those killed have been women, children or the elderly.

LSHTM stated that the destruction of Gaza’s healthcare system was the reason for the systematic under-reporting of the death toll.

Explaining the methodology used, LSHTM said, “The researchers used a statistical method known as ‘capture-recapture analysis’ to estimate the number of traumatic injury deaths. This method overlaps data from multiple sources to arrive at estimates of deaths when not all data are recorded. The sources included Palestinian Ministry of Health hospital morgue records, a respondent-driven online survey, and social media obituaries.”

It added, “The total death toll due to the war is likely to be higher as the analysis does not account for non-trauma related deaths caused by disruption to healthcare, food insecurity, inadequate water and sanitation, and disease outbreaks.”

Over the weekend, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said that nearly all of Gaza’s 1.1 million children were in need of mental health and psychological support.

According to an estimate by the United Nations, 19,000 Palestinian children have been orphaned since the start of the war. At least 203 journalists have been killed so far.

Over the weekend, US President Joe Biden had a discussion with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in which Biden gloated over the rampage jointly unleashed by Israel and the United States throughout the region.

“The president discussed the fundamentally changed regional circumstances following the ceasefire deal in

Lebanon, the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, and the weakening of Iran’s power in the region,” the White House said in a statement.

The Netanyahu government is planning to further expand the war once Trump takes office. Over the weekend, Defense Minister Israel Katz said Israel “will not allow the West Bank to turn into Gaza or south Lebanon.” He added, “Anyone who engages in terror like in Gaza will be treated like in Gaza—we will work to cut off the arms of the Iranian octopus in the refugee camps in Judea and Samaria [Israeli name for the occupied West Bank] and to maintain the security of the communities and residents.”

Last month, the *New York Times* published a detailed account reporting the existence of official Israeli military documents authorizing the killing of 20 non-combatants in every attack on a single presumed Hamas supporter, with the ratio in some cases reaching 100 to one.

The report makes clear that Israel has waged its war on Gaza as a war of extermination, with the killing of the civilian population through aerial bombardment a goal co-equal with the massacre of those who have taken up arms against the Israeli occupation.

“In each strike, the order said, officers had the authority to risk killing up to 20 civilians,” the *Times* wrote.



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