

# Calling Palestinians “barbaric animals,” US Secretary of State hails Israeli assault on Gaza City

Andre Damon  
16 September 2025

On Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio held a joint appearance with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to hail what Netanyahu called the “concluding moves” in the US-Israeli onslaught on Gaza: the conquest and destruction of Gaza City.

The Israeli onslaught against Gaza City will place the Gaza Strip under total military occupation, creating the conditions for the internment of the population in concentration camps for their extermination or forcible displacement.

“We’re going to take over and destroy the Hamas stronghold,” Netanyahu bellowed.

But the Israeli prime minister, who has a warrant for his arrest by the International Criminal Court, was outdone in genocidal bloodlust by the American secretary of state, who publicly repeated the notorious declaration by former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that the Palestinians are “animals.”

Rubio ranted, “This happened because on October 7th these animals, these barbaric animals, conducted this operation ... against innocent people.”

He concluded, “It needs to end. And how does it end? It ends by eliminating the people who did it, by ending them as a threat.”

As vast as the crimes of US imperialism have been in funding, arming and enabling the Gaza genocide, Rubio’s statement marks a new turning point. American imperialism, dropping its veil of promoting “democracy” and “human rights,” has adopted language that would not be out of place in a speech given by Adolf Hitler.

Rubio’s use of this genocidal language was the starting gun for the full-scale Israeli onslaught on Gaza City, as tanks and warplanes moved in, displacing

countless thousands at gunpoint over the choked coastal road to Gaza’s south.

This week’s assault was preceded by an unrelenting bombing campaign that leveled much of the city in preparation for a ground offensive aimed at either killing or driving out the 1 million people who have been sheltering there.

Announcing the onslaught on Gaza City, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz wrote on X, “Gaza is burning. The IDF strikes with an iron fist. ... We will not relent and we will not go back—until the completion of the mission.”

The “mission” is the destruction and displacement of an entire people, before the eyes of the world, in a genocide committed shamelessly and in plain sight.

Even as Israel launches its “concluding moves” in Gaza, it is expanding a campaign aimed at subjecting the West Bank to the destruction inflicted on Gaza.

Last week, Netanyahu announced a plan to expand Israeli settlements in the West Bank, effectively cutting the Palestinian territory in half. The settlement plan, in the words of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, aims to “bury the idea of a Palestinian state.”

In an act of approval for Israel’s annexation plans for the West Bank, Rubio took part in the inauguration of an illegal settler “architectural tourism” site in East Jerusalem, participating in the excavation of a tunnel under Palestinian homes.

The same day as Rubio met with Netanyahu, the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory published a 72-page report meticulously and irrefutably demonstrating that Israel is systematically committing genocide in Gaza.

Announcing the commission's findings in a *New Times* op-ed, the 81-year-old South African jurist Navi Pillay declared, "Our conclusion is stark: Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza."

Pillay laid out the unprecedented scope of the mass murder. Over 64,000 Palestinians have been killed, including 18,000 children and nearly 10,000 women. As a result, the life expectancy in Gaza has fallen nearly in half, from 75 to 40, in one of the steepest declines ever recorded. One child has died every hour in Gaza.

Pillay declared, "These are not the accidents of war. They are acts calculated to bring about the destruction of a people."

The report explains that the crime of genocide has two components: one physical ("actus reus") and one mental ("mens rea"). The guilt of Israeli officials in both is beyond doubt. The report accuses Israeli leaders of "killing members of the group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction."

On previous occasions, Pillay and fellow members of her commission have noted that the mental component of genocide is typically the most difficult to prove, as all previous genocides had been accompanied by systematic cover-ups. But in the case of the Gaza genocide, Israeli leaders have made genocidal statements flagrantly and openly, including the declaration by Gallant that "We are fighting human animals"—which is now repeated by Rubio.

As such, the report declares, "On the mens rea of genocide, the Commission concludes that statements made by Israeli authorities are direct evidence of genocidal intent."

Earlier this month, the *Washington Post* published a secret plan, which was the subject of extensive discussion at the White House.

It presented the destruction and ethnic cleansing of Gaza as a financial venture, declaring that every Palestinian who leaves Gaza is worth \$23,000 to the enclave's occupiers. Within this framework, genocide is presented as a money-making scheme, in which the more people who are killed and the more buildings that are leveled, the more money the US, Israel and their billionaire investment "partners" make.

The report presented the genocide within the context of the US-Israeli plan for a "new Middle East," under

US domination, which serves as a military and logistics hub for US war plans against China.

The Gaza genocide is a warning: American imperialism, facing a social, economic and geopolitical crisis from which it can find no way out, is capable of any crime, whether against the peoples of the world or the working class inside the United States.

Nothing the United Nations says or does will alter the trajectory of Israel's actions. Israel is not restrained by international opinion or diplomatic resolutions. It is a criminal regime, run by indicted war criminals, which views genocide as a legitimate instrument of state policy.

But Israel's crimes are the crimes of imperialism. The Gaza genocide was launched under the Biden administration, with the full support of the Democratic Party. It is now being carried through under Trump and his government of fascists. The slaughter has been armed, financed and justified by all the imperialist powers—Britain, Germany, France, Canada and others—all of which have blood on their hands.

The annihilation of Gaza is part of a wider imperialist offensive. From Ukraine to the Middle East, from Africa to Asia, the ruling elites are unleashing war and destruction in a bid to redivide the world under conditions of deep economic and political crisis. Their aim is the reimposition of colonial-style domination and the crushing of all resistance by the working class. In pursuit of this aim, there are no limits to their crimes.

The experience of Gaza, in nearly two years of mass murder and collective punishment, proves a decisive lesson: The genocide cannot be stopped by appeals to the capitalist powers that perpetrate and defend it. It can be halted only by the independent mobilization of the working class in every country, in a mass movement that takes aim at the root cause of war and oppression—the capitalist system itself.



To contact the WWSW and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**