

United Nations condemns Iran's self-defence strikes amid American imperialism's war of extermination

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The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) effectively endorsed the US-Israeli war against Iran Wednesday with the passage of Resolution 2817 (2026). The text “condemns in the strongest terms” Iran’s retaliatory strikes on the Gulf states, while saying nothing about the nearly two-week-long bombardment of the country of 90 million people by American imperialism and its Israeli ally.

The resolution’s pretext is that Iran launched retaliatory strikes against seven countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. But all seven host US military bases actively being used to wage the war on Iran—from the Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain, to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, to Al Dhafra in the UAE. These states are not neutral bystanders. They are, in effect, combatants. Iranian strikes on their territories were launched in self-defence and have killed approximately 11 civilians. The US and Israel have killed over 1,300 people in Iran alone.

The resolution did not even note the fact that the United States, led by the fascist Donald Trump, launched an unprovoked war of aggression against Iran, a historically oppressed country, on February 28. Aply assisted by its Zionist ally, Washington carried out within a matter of hours the targeted assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and dozens of other leading political and military personnel of an ostensibly sovereign state.

Within less than two weeks of carpet bombing, American and Israeli missiles have slaughtered thousands of Iranian civilians, including over 160 children in a single strike on a girls’ school. The war criminals have struck dozens of hospitals and schools, sought to disrupt energy supplies and poison the environment by destroying oil refineries, and forced millions of people to flee their homes in Iran and Lebanon, where the Zionist regime has also undertaken air and ground operations. None of this rated so much as a mention.

The resolution passed by 13 votes to 0. Reading as if the UN representatives had simply transcribed American imperialism’s war aims, the press release announcing passage of the resolution stated, “It specifically condemned Iran’s attacks against residential areas and civilian objects—demanding their immediate cessation—while also demanding that Tehran halt its threats, provocations and actions aimed at interfering with maritime trade, as well as support to proxy groups across the region.”

Countries voting in favour of this outrageous document included the permanent members Britain, France and the United States, as well as non-permanent members Bahrain, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Liberia, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia.

Particularly significant is the fact that Russia and China, both permanent members of the UNSC and thus in a position to veto the resolution, chose instead to abstain and allow it to pass. In so doing, they handed American imperialism political backing for its war of annihilation against Iran. In a miserable face-saving exercise, Russia tabled a second resolution, which it knew would never pass, calling for an end to the war and a diplomatic solution. Only four out of 15 members could bring themselves to support it.

This pathetic performance flows from the social nature and interests of these two capitalist regimes. Despite NATO’s systematic encirclement of the country and provocation of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin still believes that a compromise with Washington that recognises the Russian oligarchy’s “right” to exploit its own working class and control a sphere of influence is possible.

By backing Washington’s demolition of Iran and the plundering of its resources, the Kremlin, operating on the old Stalinist mantra of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, hopes it can cut a deal on Ukraine and US investment with Trump.

As for the Chinese government headed by Xi Jinping, a major consideration in the immediate term is Trump’s impending visit to Beijing at the end of this month. In order to maintain the prospect of Chinese capitalism securing an economic arrangement with the US, the Stalinist regime is more than willing to provide a diplomatic victory to the war criminal Trump and at the expense of its ostensible ally, Iran.

But the fantasies shared by the ruling cliques in Beijing and Moscow are incompatible with the imperatives of American imperialism. A new partition of the globe and its resources among the major powers is well underway, and the US is not about to peacefully accept any challenge to its hegemonic position. On the contrary, Washington is sending a message to Beijing and Moscow that they are next on the hit list.

For more than three decades, Washington has sought to offset its accelerating economic decline by deploying its still overwhelming military superiority in a series of bloody wars of aggression.

Continuing this course, American imperialism's war on Iran aims in the first place to eliminate the main regional obstacle to US dominance over the Middle East, a key energy-exporting region that also is strategically located for trade routes between Asia and Europe.

However, the war's more fundamental goal is the further strategic and economic isolation of Russia and China, with the latter in particular depending to a significant extent on cheap Iranian oil imports. The war began less than two months after Washington's abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and the installation of a pliant puppet in Caracas, which was until January 2026 another major oil exporter to China and is now being turned into a fiefdom of the American energy conglomerates.

All of the imperialist powers have today cast aside any remaining restraints imposed by international law and diplomacy following the horrors of the Second World War. As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained over two years ago, "All the 'red lines' that demarcate civilization from barbarism are being effaced." The war of annihilation against Iran, which with Wednesday's vote now has received a stamp of approval from over 140 governments through their co-sponsoring of Resolution 2817, was preceded by Israel's imperialist-backed genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza. This slaughter was backed by the imperialist powers in North America and Europe, who not only supplied the Zionist butchers with weaponry but systematically suppressed all forms of opposition to genocide at home.

Trump, at the head of the world's most powerful imperialist state, gives the most grotesque and repulsive expression to imperialist barbarism. His wars of aggression abroad go hand in hand with his operation to establish a fascist dictatorship at home.

But the direction of travel in the ruling class is everywhere the same. Just this week, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen declared in a speech, "Europe can no longer be a custodian for the old world order, for a world that has gone and will not return." French President Emmanuel Macron is expanding his country's nuclear arsenal and pledging to station weapons throughout the continent, while Germany's ruling elite is preparing another grab for world power by spending €1 trillion on its military. To impose the full burden of these war budgets on the working class, ruling elites across the continent are paving the way for far-right parties to take power.

The belief of government officials in Moscow and Beijing that one can avert imperialist world war by means of clever diplomacy and a "multipolar" capitalist development by rebalancing relations between competing nation states is delusional.

Over 30 years ago, leading Stalinist bureaucrats convinced themselves that if only they dissolved the Soviet Union and restored capitalism, the imperialists would welcome them into the circle of great powers and the world capitalist market with open arms. Then as now, their national schemes for capitalist development collide with the objective contradiction of world capitalism between the globalised economy and the division of the world into nation-states—a contradiction that is driving the great powers into a third world war.

Leon Trotsky addressed these positions during a previous period of capitalist breakdown in the 1930s. With the imperialist powers

racing towards the Second World War, the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union broke with any remaining vestiges of the programme of world socialist revolution, turned the Comintern into the chief disrupter and betrayer of the international working class, and focused the Soviet Union's foreign policy on building diplomatic ties with the imperialists through the League of Nations to preserve the bureaucracy's privileged position.

Trotsky skewered the fiction of imperialist diplomacy, writing in 1936, "The League in its defence of the status quo is not an organisation of 'peace,' but an organisation of the violence of the imperialist minority over the overwhelming majority of mankind. This 'order' can be maintained only with the help of continuous wars, little and big—today in the colonies, tomorrow between the great powers."

The only basis to stop imperialist war is the mobilisation of the international working class on a revolutionary socialist programme. As David North stressed at Sunday's *World Socialist Web Site* webinar on halting the war against Iran, socialists must "not follow the war map, but the map of the class struggle."

The urgency of this orientation is laid bare by the UNSC vote. While there is no principled opposition among any of the world's governments to the slaughter of the Iranian masses and the risking of the lives of millions more throughout the region, opposition to war among workers around the world is already strong and will escalate as the economic consequences of the war take effect. The task before the International Committee of the Fourth International and its Socialist Equality Parties is to arm this burgeoning movement with a socialist programme to overthrow capitalism, the root cause of imperialist war.



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