

Israel Invades Rafah and the Genocide Will be Completed with US Complicity

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Dozens of Palestinians were killed across Gaza as Israeli warplanes and artillery attacked overnight, following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's order to seize the Rafah border crossing in Gaza.

Israeli warplanes dropped leaflets in eastern Rafah telling people to flee and move to what Israel called a humanitarian zone to the north, as the Israeli military bombarded the area.

Israel has told Gazans to move to a coastal section of Gaza for months. But the UN has said it is neither safe nor equipped to receive them.

Rafah, a city of around 170,000 before the war, has swollen to more than one million as Gazans driven from their homes in other parts of the enclave have taken shelter there. Conditions there are catastrophic, with inadequate shelter, sanitation, medical care, food and fuel.

A hospital in Deir Al Balah in central Gaza said it received 24 bodies, and reports of the heaviest assault are in the central and eastern areas of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, with air strikes in the south and the vicinity of the Rafah crossing.

Netanyahu said the Israeli military would proceed with an assault on Rafah, where it believes Hamas fighters are dug in. Tanks have sealed off eastern Rafah from the south this week, capturing and shutting the only crossing between Gaza and Egypt, a vital route for supplies.

At least seven people were killed in Israeli air strikes on dozens of houses in Jabalia in the

northern Gaza Strip. Israel also bombed the north of the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al Zawaida in the central Gaza Strip.

Biden Pauses Arms to Israel and Orders a Report

This week, US President Joe Biden announced that his administration has “held up” at least one shipment of weapons to Israel, saying the US wouldn’t transfer certain weapons to Israel if it proceeded with an assault on the city of Rafah’s densely populated areas.

Immediately stopping all transfers of arms and military support would be consistent with the US’s international and domestic legal obligations.

Since November, Human Rights Watch has called for the suspension of arms transfers to Israel given the real risk that weapons would be used to commit grave abuses. Providing weapons that knowingly and significantly would contribute to unlawful attacks make those providing them complicit in war crimes.

Several of the US’s Western allies have already revised their policies of supplying weapons to Israel. In March, Canada announced it would cease future arms exports to Israel, while Italy and Spain also stopped.

Israel’s plan for an all-out assault on Rafah has ignited one of the biggest rifts with America.

Biden ordered a report from the State Department and the Department of Defense concerning weapons to Israel.

The State Department report avoids a direct accusation, but raises the prospect that Israel may have violated humanitarian laws by failing to protect civilians in Gaza.

The findings further angered Democrats in Congress who have grown increasingly critical of Israel’s conduct in Gaza. They argue that Israel has indiscriminately killed civilians with American arms and intentionally hindered US supplied humanitarian aid.

The US provides Israel with \$3.8 billion in annual military aid, and Congress last month approved an additional \$14 billion in emergency funding.

Hillary Clinton Ridicules University Students

Despite the fact that Hillary Clinton is a professor of international and public affairs at Colombia University, the former Secretary of State, Vice President, and presidential candidate, denounced her own students, as well as students across the US.

In a recent interview on MSNBC, she suggested that young Americans are largely ignorant. In a display of arrogant disdain, she painted all the campus protesters as idiots.

“They don’t know very much at all about the history of the Middle East, or, frankly about history in many areas of the world, including in our own country,” Hillary Clinton said the MSNBC interview.

Clinton supports the genocide in Gaza, because she is a Zionist and denies the freedom of Palestine, even though freedom is a core American value. But, perhaps she has never studied what are the American core values?

Colombia University has seen some of the most impassioned and protracted protests against Israel's genocide committed on the Gaza's civilian population.

In February, Clinton was shouted down by protestors during a lecture.

"Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton, you are a war criminal!" an angry protestor yelled as she walked onto a stage to address the students.

"The people of Libya, the people of Iraq, the people of Syria, the people of Palestine as well as the people of America will never forgive you."

Apparently, at least one American college student does understand the modern history of the Middle East, contrary to Clinton's accusation.

Humanitarian Crisis

For five days, no fuel and virtually no humanitarian aid has entered the Gaza Strip. Soon, the lack of fuel will stop humanitarian operations. Food in the south will run out in the coming days. The last functioning bakery in the south is about to run out of fuel, while people are being forced to move again, lifesaving supplies that sustain and support them have been entirely cut off.

On Friday, UNICEF's senior emergency coordinator in the Gaza Strip, Hamish Young, said from Rafah that in his 30 years working on large-scale humanitarian emergencies "I've never been involved in a situation as devastating, complex or erratic as this." He said. "Families lack proper sanitation facilities, drinking water and shelter."

The flow of aid, the vast majority of which goes through two border crossings in southern Gaza, has come to a stop this week, and aid like food and medicines has not been allowed through the crossing since last Sunday, according to Scott Anderson, a senior official at UNRWA, the main UN agency that aids Gaza.

More than 34,000 people have died in Gaza. Cindy McCain, the director of the World Food Program has said that parts of the Gaza Strip are experiencing a "full-blown famine." As of mid-April, Gazan health officials said that at least 28 children younger than 12 had died from malnutrition in hospitals and perhaps dozens more outside medical centers.

The Rafah crossing remains closed, and had been an important gate for injured and sick people to leave the enclave to receive medical treatment abroad. The Gazan Health Ministry has said that dozens of people with illnesses such as breast cancer and lymphoma have been unable to leave Gaza since Sunday.

After Israel's incursion into Rafah this week, the Israeli military shut down the Kerem Shalom crossing and seized the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, stopping the flow of desperately needed food, fuel and medical supplies. Since Sunday, no aid trucks have entered Gaza from either entry point, even after Israel said that it had reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing on Wednesday, according to Scott Anderson, a senior official at UNRWA.

The entry of aid into Gaza has been heavily restricted by Israel since the war started, creating what aid experts say is a human-made hunger crisis.

An American ship carrying aid intended for Gaza has departed from Cyprus, the Pentagon

said, but a temporary floating pier constructed by the US military is not in place to unload the food and supplies.

UNRWA said that it had temporarily closed its headquarters in East Jerusalem for the safety of its staff after parts of the compound were set on fire by Jewish settlers who cheered while watching the humanitarian office ablaze.

Palestine and the UN

The UN General Assembly approved a resolution for a Palestinian membership bid by a vote of 143 to 9 with 25 nations abstaining. The Assembly can only grant full membership with the approval of the Security Council.

A 'yes' vote is a vote for Palestinian existence. It is not against Israel, but it is against the attempts to deprive Palestinians of a state, and reflects growing global solidarity with Palestinians who yearn to be free of a brutal military occupation.

But, the resolution does not mean a Palestinian state will be recognized and admitted to the United Nations as a full member anytime soon, because the United States would almost inevitably wield its veto power to kill the bid, and to deprive Palestinians their freedom.

The resolution declares that "the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations" under its charter rules and recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter with a favorable outcome.

The United States voted no, along with Hungary, Argentina, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia and Nauru. Experts point out that a vote against Palestinian statehood was a vote against the two-state solution.

France, a close US ally and one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, has supported the Palestinian bid for statehood breaking away from the US stance at the UN both at the Council and the Assembly vote.

South Africa Again Reporting Israel to the ICJ

On Friday, South Africa sought new emergency measures by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel over its latest offensive against Rafah, and asked the ICJ to issue constraints on Israel, saying "the very survival" of Palestinians in Gaza was under threat.

Israel has condemned South Africa's previous allegations at the ICJ that it has launched a genocide in Gaza.

In filings disclosed by the ICJ on Friday, South Africa asked the court to order Israel to immediately withdraw from Rafah, and to "cease its military offensive" and allow "unimpeded access" to international officials, investigators and journalists.

"Rafah is the last population center in Gaza that has not been substantially destroyed by Israel and as such the last refuge for Palestinians in Gaza," South Africa stated.

Gaza Ceasefire Talks

"The only hope is an immediate ceasefire," UNRWA said.

Hamas says negotiations with Israel for a permanent cease-fire have fallen through after Israel rejected its proposals, including demands for a permanent cease-fire, complete withdrawal of Gaza Israel's forces from Gaza, the return of displaced people and a prisoner exchange.

Oct. 7 attacks led by Hamas and other armed groups killed more than 1,200 Israelis and led to the capture of about 250 others.

Talks on a ceasefire and a release of hostages held by Hamas ended in Cairo on Thursday without agreement after Israel rejected a proposal by Qatari and Egyptian mediators.

Hamas had said it agreed at the start of the week to a proposal by Qatari and Egyptian mediators that had previously been accepted by Israel, but later Israel rejected it.

Israeli protesters carried signs saying "Cease-Fire, Hostage Deal, Now!" and "Stop the War, Hostage Deal Now!"

Families and supporters of the hostages marched Wednesday in Tel Aviv, calling on Netanyahu's government to make a deal to free their loved ones. Netanyahu has said Israel cannot end the war as long as Hamas's rule in Gaza remains intact.

Palestinian armed groups still hold approximately 132 hostages in Gaza, but Israel says it has determined that at least 36 of them are dead.

Killing Journalists

Today marks the second anniversary of the death of Al-Jazeera's veteran TV journalist Shireen Abu Akleh after she was shot by Israeli forces while reporting in the occupied West Bank on May 11, 2022.

Press advocates push for accountability in Abu Akleh's killing, who was an American citizen, but the lack of justice reflects a pattern of impunity in Israel's attacks on press.

In 214 days, Israel has killed 142 journalists in Gaza, approximately one every 36 hours. The staggering death toll makes the war the deadliest conflict for journalists in modern history.

When Israel can kill an American citizen, who was among the highest profile journalists in the Arab world, on camera and get away with it, that sends a very clear message about Israeli impunity, and Biden's complicity.

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