

# Could Crisis in the Middle East Cost Kamala Harris Election? Harris' Support of Israeli Military Action. "Pro-Palestinian Voters Prefer Trump"

By [Ahmed Adel](#)

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*Support for Democratic candidate **Kamala Harris** among Arab-American and Muslim voters, as well as among progressive and young voters, has plummeted in recent weeks due to her backing of Israel's military actions in Gaza and Lebanon, putting her victory in key states like Michigan at risk.*

On September 9, Quinnipiac University released its final polls before the US general elections. The survey, which covered three of the most critical states key to the aspirations of Harris and Republican Donald Trump, showed a notable decline for the Democrat in the voting intention of those surveyed, but none more so than in Michigan. There, the current vice president went from having 50% of voting intention in September (compared to Trump's 45%) to obtaining 47% in October, with the Republican moving into the lead with 50%.

According to many analysts, **the decline is due to Harris' supposed conservative shift in recent weeks, which has seen her campaigning with former Republican Liz Cheney and boasting about the support of her father, former Vice President Dick Cheney, the architect of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, to toughening her rhetoric on Latin American immigrants and, especially, her alignment with Israel at a time when the Jewish state is expanding its airstrikes against Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.**

By backing President Joe Biden's staunch defence of Israel, **Harris has suffered in the voting intention among the young and progressive electorate, but especially among Arab American and Muslim voters.** The latter has historically voted for Democratic candidates in every election.

**Michigan has the largest number of voters who are descendants or immigrants from Arab countries. It is one of the key states in Harris' campaign to win the election.**

If Harris does not win Michigan, which Biden won by three points in 2020 but Hillary Clinton marginally lost in 2016, her path to obtaining the 370 Electoral College votes becomes almost impossible since, according to all the polls, the Republican is showing great strength in other Democrat states such as Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.



Harris's refusal to distance herself from Biden's absolute support for Netanyahu could be catastrophic for the Democratic candidate.

Under other circumstances, Michigan might have facilitated Harris' victory, but this is one of the most disconcerting aspects of her campaign: the fact that she has not sought to reach out to that electorate – even if for electoral reasons, not moral ones – that is critical of Israel's actions. It is recalled that **Harris' campaign refused even to have a Palestinian speaker at the Democratic Convention, despite the fact that they invited Israeli speakers. Harris herself has refused to commit to stopping the shipment of American weapons to Israel if she wins the election.**

**While the Arab and Muslim electorate represents 4% of Michigan's total population, which translates into 200,000 potential voters,** Trump's margin of victory over Clinton in 2016 was just 10,000 votes. If the shift in voting intention materialises, it could give the election to the former president.

**Today, according to the latest polls, not only does Trump lead Harris among the general electorate in Michigan, but he also leads her among the Arab and Muslim population,** something that no one could have imagined just two years ago. **In the past, that electorate has leaned overwhelmingly Democratic in every presidential election, including in 2020, when Biden captured 60% of that vote, with Trump getting just 37%.**

The reason for such an abrupt change in just four years has an obvious explanation – Biden's support for Israel's military action in the Middle East, which has left tens of thousands of dead in Gaza and Lebanon in the last year, most of them civilians. Voters see Biden and Harris talking about a ceasefire in Gaza, but not only do they fail to achieve it, they continue to send weapons to Israel.

Trump has promised in this campaign that he will re-implement the executive order he established in 2017, which prohibits the entry into the country of citizens from a series of Muslim-majority countries. But for Arab-Americans, this is not comparable to Biden and Harris financing and supporting Israel.

Many **pro-Palestine voters prefer Trump** as they see him as a pragmatic politician, believing that while the Republican has a good relationship with Netanyahu, he would not hesitate to get rid of the Israeli prime minister if he became politically inconvenient for him. On the contrary, Biden has repeatedly said throughout his career that he considers himself a "Zionist" who always defends Israel, leading many voters to believe that he will not change his mind regarding the continued sending of weapons to Israel instead of deepening a diplomatic solution.

In many cases, **the shift of this electorate towards Trump is explained by the logic of the lesser evil**, and it is not illogical that the desire to punish Biden and Harris for allowing Israel to bomb their countries of origin daily than any other argument.

Other voters in that group, on the other hand, have decided to support the independent candidate Jill Stein, who is expected to obtain almost a third of the votes from Arabs and Muslims in Michigan. Again, this would be catastrophic for Harris because many of these voters traditionally support the Democrats. However, Stein is the best option for these voters because she is the only candidate who has openly criticised Netanyahu.

It is inexplicable that Harris was recruited at the last minute after Biden's debacle in the presidential debate with Trump. **She now wants to distance herself from the unpopular Biden administration but maintains the same position on most issues, including Israel. It is clearly a bad electoral strategy.** But if there is one thing that Washington cannot object to, it is the war machine, and Harris is proving it, even if it hurts her election chances.

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**Ahmed Adel** is a Cairo-based geopolitics and political economy researcher. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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