

# Have We Learned Nothing? Biden Backs Mass Murder in the Middle East

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*The Gaza Strip, measures only 25 miles long and five miles wide. It is one of the most densely populated places on the planet.*

*Since 2007, Israel has imposed a full [blockade](#) on Gaza from the air, land, and sea. The two million Palestinians living there ([half of which are under the age of 18](#)) are [trapped](#) in an open air prison where food, potable water, electricity, medicine, building materials, etc. are severely restricted by the Israeli authorities.*

The latest Israeli military operation in Gaza was called “Guardian of the Walls,” a reference no doubt to the walls enclosing the Palestinian population of mostly refugees, victims of Zionist settler colonialism, forcibly prevented from returning home. Highlighting the unfairness of the fight, at the war’s onset reports described Israeli [tanks](#) and [80 aircraft, including F-35’s](#), being deployed against a people militarily conquered and occupied since 1967. The Gazans have no air force, no navy, and no control over their borders, airspace, or coasts.

Following 11 days of bombing, an Egypt brokered ceasefire was accepted after multiple offers were rejected by Tel Aviv.

## **Ethnic Cleansing in Jerusalem**

Last month’s war on Gaza was largely precipitated by an ethnic cleansing campaign occurring in East Jerusalem, illegally occupied by Israel. The threatened evictions of dozens of families from the [Sheikh Jarrah](#) neighborhood sparked protests among the Palestinians.

Writer and researcher Yanis Iqbal [provides](#) some background;

Beginning from May 2, 2021, Israel has begun its attempts to forcibly [evict](#) 26 Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. These families consist of refugees since the Nakba (the 1947-49 [expulsion and forced exile](#) of over two-thirds of the population by Zionist forces) and have been denied their United Nations (UN)-mandated right to return home. They were relocated in the neighborhood when it was

under Jordanian control between 1948 and 1967.

Israeli propaganda attempts to present the idea that the homes being seized were once owned by Jews. This is a complete lie - the Jordanian authorities were the ones to finance the construction of the homes. Since the early 1970s, Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah have been battling a series of Jewish settler organizations who filed lawsuits claiming the land belonged to them. Many Palestinians have been [kicked out](#) of the neighborhood and replaced by Israeli settlers. The current standoff and protests came about after an Israeli court [ruled](#) in favor of Nahalat Shimon International - an organization [based](#) in the US - and Ateret Cohanim, another settlement group that seeks to take over the properties.

In its bloody quest to eliminate Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah, the settler state has left no stone unturned. Combat-clad murderers have been [sent in](#) to terrorize Palestinian sit-ins with skunk water, tear gas, rubber-coated bullets and shock grenades. Protesters have been physically assaulted, kneeled on, choked, and shot at with live rounds. On May 7, 2021, the Israeli police [forced](#) its way into the neighborhood as Palestinians and solidarity activists gathered to break their Ramadan fasting in solidarity with 40 Palestinians, including 10 children.

Far right violence had already been ramping up in Jerusalem. In one [illustrative example](#) from late April, a Israeli brownshirt-like group named Lehava led marches with memorable choruses such as “your village will be burnt down,” “may your village burn,” “Arabs get out,” and “death to Arabs.” The demonstrations saw large groups of Jewish youths hurling rocks at Palestinians, including inside their homes and vehicles. Participants were encouraged to arm themselves and get violent. [Haaretz](#) reported on a social media group administered by far right Knesset member, Itamar Ben-Gvir, that included somebody enthusiastically promoting plans to burn Palestinians with Molotov cocktails. A video shared on social media showed an Israeli man driving through East Jerusalem firing his gun in the air to frighten the occupied Palestinian residents. The Lehava event was explicitly promoted to “restore Jewish dignity” to Jerusalem. Palestinian counter protests at Damascus Gate in the Old City were responded to by police using similar measures to those deployed against the sit ins described above by Iqbal: 105 people were injured, with 22 hospitalized.

During Israel’s crackdown on early May protests against the planned dispossession in Sheikh Jarrah, settlers again chanted “death to Arabs” and the police [used cannons](#) to fire the aforementioned “skunk water” into people’s houses. The pervasive stink spray smells like sewage and remains for weeks. After drying, it is only made worse when it coming into contact with water making it especially arduous to clean.

### **Attacks at the Al Aqsa Mosque**

Just prior to the war on Gaza, tens of thousands came to worship during the final days of Ramadan, at Jerusalem’s Al Aqsa Mosque (the third holiest site in Islam) and its surrounding compound. The Israeli police, [four times over five days, stormed the holy site making the area a battleground](#). They fired off stun grenades, sound bombs, tear gas, and rubber bullets, including inside the Al Aqsa Mosque terrorizing the unarmed occupied population. These [rubber coated steel bullets were often aimed at the heads, faces](#), and eyes of worshippers and protesters.

In an [interview](#) with Scott Horton, journalist Alan Macleod discussed the corporate media’s

cynical efforts to create a “both sides narrative” despite the huge power disparity painted by vivid scenes of occupied civilians armed with “stones and prayer rugs” standing off with the Israeli security forces sporting their “machine guns and stun grenades.”

Even clinics were not spared. At Mondoweiss, Yumna Patel [reported](#) “[v]ideos from a clinic in East Jerusalem where injured Palestinians were being treated showed Israeli forces firing sound bombs into the clinic itself.”

As a result of consecutive days of Israeli violence and “clashes,” hundreds of Palestinians were injured and hospitalized. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, even before the rockets and bomb attacks, those at the Mosque and the surrounding neighborhood described the area as a “[war zone](#).”

### **Hamas Retaliates on Behalf of The Palestinians**

The armed brigades of Hamas, the militant group ruling the Gaza Strip, gave Israel an ultimatum that evening to withdraw from Sheikh Jarrah, the al Aqsa Mosque, and release Palestinian prisoners. The Israelis refused. Hamas retaliated on behalf of Palestinians throughout the occupied territories. Those Palestinians have essentially no other armed force to deter or defend against Israeli aggression. The first of the crude rockets launched by Hamas into Jerusalem killed nobody and “lightly injured” one Israeli. Israel responded with [airstrikes on Gaza that killed 20 people](#), nine of which were children.

As Al Jazeera [reported](#):

Most of the children belonged to the same extended family. Two siblings, 11-year-old Ibrahim and seven-year-old Marwan, were the only children of Yousef al-Masri.

The children were playing outside their homes before the Ramadan iftar meal in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip, before two explosions rocked the street.

Youssef al-Masri, the father of the siblings was [quoted](#) in the media as well, “My children were martyred. I cannot find any justification whatsoever for targeting someone passing through overcrowded civilian neighborhoods where dozens of children usually play.”

For nearly two weeks Israel then proceeded to pummel Gaza with high explosives.

### **Disgracing The American People**

Along with the [already massive](#) but [growing](#) military and financial aid to Israel, the American government underwrote every bit of the massacre with diplomatic cover as it ensued. At the U.N. Security Council, the U.S. [blocked](#) three successive statements urging a ceasefire and cessation of attacks against Palestinians in just the first week of bombings. The third statement blocked was introduced by Norway, China, and Tunisia.

The French later introduced a draft Security Council Resolution demanding a ceasefire which the U.S. [threatened to veto](#).

On the domestic scene, mainstream media sprang into action providing an [abundance](#) of [hasbara](#) to American audiences attempting to muddy the waters sufficiently to keep people from taking the obvious moral [position against](#) the U.S. backed hunt.

Along with his [underlings](#), though given [countless opportunities](#), [Biden](#), long [known](#) as “Israel’s man in Washington,” repeatedly refused, to condemn the [apartheid state](#) even as it [mass murdered children](#).

Indeed, both the executive branch and much of the legislature are eager to provide “[more for Israel](#)” at the American people’s expense. In early June, Defense Minister Benny Gantz, who in a [video message](#) during the war threatened “Gaza will burn,” visited Washington D.C. to [request](#) another billion dollars in military aid. Many in [Congress](#) are thrilled at the opportunity to fulfill his request and Biden has promised to “[replenish](#)” Israel’s U.S. funded [Iron Dome missile defense system](#).

Once again, Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a complete mockery of his post as America’s top diplomat. As Dave DeCamp, news editor at Antiwar.com, has [written](#):

In a pathetic attempt to pretend that the Biden administration cares about the suffering Israel is causing... Blinken announced additional aid for the Palestinians after the truce was reached. The assistance includes about \$5.5 million to rebuild Gaza, a pittance compared to what the US is poised to give Israel.

In an interview with Israel’s Channel 12, [Blinken somehow claimed](#) that Israel took “significant steps” to avoid killing civilians in Gaza. This ignores the deliberate targeting of civilian homes. In one Israeli air raid, bombs [hit a residential building](#) in the al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza, killing 10 people; two women and eight children...

The violence was not limited to Gaza. [In the West Bank and East Jerusalem](#), at least 29 Palestinians were gunned down by Israeli security forces.

Not to be outdone by the Democrats, in the neoconservative wing of the Senate, Marco Rubio used Israel’s slaughter in Gaza as a political opportunity to sabotage renewed talks with Tehran. Rubio led an effort, backed by more than forty other Republican lawmakers, to [thwart all sanctions relief](#) and end talks with Iran. Rubio was hoping to preclude any U.S. return to the nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA constitutes the most intrusive international inspections regime in history over Iran’s civilian nuclear program. Iran is a long time signatory of the Non Proliferation Treaty unlike Israel, who has a clandestine but well known nuclear weapons arsenal.

## **Killing Gazans**

[More than 250 people were murdered](#) in Gaza, including 67 children, another 2,000 were wounded. [Almost 17,000 homes were demolished](#), displacing tens of thousands within Gaza. The Israeli airstrikes and artillery [onslaughts](#) hit [water supplies](#), [refugee camps](#), [apartment buildings](#), [schools](#), [Gaza’s only Covid-19 test center](#), a [Doctors Without Borders](#) clinic, and [towers](#) housing media offices.

On top of the annual \$3.8 billion in military aid to Israel, five days before the war, Biden approved another [\\$735 million weapons sale](#). The [sale](#) consists primarily of Boeing’s Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs). The JDAMs are used to convert unguided bombs into precision guided munitions or “smart bombs.” [JDAMs](#) were a [weapon of choice](#) during the assault on Gaza.

In one instance, Israel dropped a “[smart bomb](#)” on a building that contained offices used by the Associated Press, Middle East Eye, and Al Jazeera.

As Newsweek [reported](#),

The targeting and destruction of Al-Jalaa Tower have been condemned by a number of local and foreign media groups, including two of its occupants, The Associated Press and Al Jazeera, which launched its own investigation identifying the weapon that wrecked its offices as a GBU-31, one of several JDAM variants known to have been exported by the U.S. to Israel in past years.

Israel even [bombed roads around hospitals](#) impeding ambulances from helping victims reach healthcare centers. A week into the war, Gaza's Ministry of Information was reporting \$18 million worth of damage done to streets and other key infrastructure alone.

### **“Why Do They Hate Us?” 20 Years Later**

In the wake of the events of September 11th, 2001, Americans often pondered “why do they hate us?” The best way to answer this question is to analyze the [words](#) of Osama Bin Laden, the words he used to convince others to follow him and join his cause.

Throughout the 1990s, he called for violence against the U.S. [explicitly](#) for the U.S. Army and Air Force bases occupying Muslim holy land on the Arabian Peninsula. He railed against America, under then President Bill Clinton, for making the Peninsula a “staging post” for the bombing and blockade of Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims. He also pointed to U.S. support for myriad authoritarian Middle East dictatorships such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He hoped to [bait us into a protracted war](#) that would bleed us dry. The plan is for us to eventually leave, but only after bankrupting ourselves and destabilizing the region, making al Qaeda's long desired local revolutions more plausible. His plan is working better than expected.

In 1996, Bin Laden issued his first “fatwa” against the United States, he did not incite hate against Americans for their love of freedom and liberty. Contrarily, he specifically complained about U.S. support for Israel's crimes against the Palestinians.

From his “[Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places](#),”

*The youths hold you responsible for all the killings, evictions, and displacements of the Muslims and the violation of their sacred places which were carried out by your Jewish brothers in Palestine using moneys and arms you supplied them with. [emphasis added]*

Bin Laden later [told](#) CNN in 1997,

*We declared jihad against the U.S. government because the U.S. government is unjust, criminal, and tyrannical. It has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous and criminal, whether directly or through its support of the Israeli occupation of [Palestine]... we believe the U.S. is directly responsible for those who were killed in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq. [emphasis added]*

Along with some of the other fellow lead hijackers, Mohammed Atta, the man who piloted American Airlines Flight 11 into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, was motivated to attack Americans over their government's support for Israel. In the book [Enough Already: Time to End the War on Terrorism](#), Scott Horton details Atta's trajectory,

...as Lawrence Wright reported in *The Looming Tower*, in April 1996, after Israel launched their Operation Grapes of Wrath campaign in Southern Lebanon,... Atta signed his last will and testament, a symbol of his willingness to die in the fight against those he blamed for the war. As journalist Terry McDermott explains in *Perfect Soldiers*, his book on Atta's so-called "Hamburg cell" of September 11th plotters, they had all agreed it was the Americans who were responsible for what Israel was doing since the U.S. government gives Israel so many billions of dollars in military equipment and other financial aid.

During Operation Grapes of Wrath, in what is called the First Qana Massacre, the Israelis infamously bombed a U.N. compound killing more than one hundred civilians seeking shelter. Qana was referenced often by Bin Laden in the speeches and writings that influenced Atta and his associates to join up the jihad.

In reality, Israel is ruthlessly occupying about six million people in Palestine with virtually no rights while expanding settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The so called "Two State Solution" is [dead](#). [Human Rights Watch](#) and [B'Tselem](#), Israel's top human rights organization, issued reports this year calling the situation in Israel/Palestine a one-state situation akin to apartheid. As Sheldon Richman [says](#), one state "dedicated to Jewish supremacy or domination." Lately, [Israeli ultra-nationalism, with the accompanying street violence](#), has been on full display without the establishment media's filters. During the war, evidence proliferated across social media with [videos](#) exposing, yet again, the dystopian reality that is the life of Palestinians not just in the occupied territories but, within the 1948 borders too, in what is called Israel proper. In cities like [Bet Yam](#) and [Lod](#), Arabs were attacked in the streets by roving mobs of Israelis destroying Palestinian owned businesses and storefronts.

## **What Must Be Done**

It's been 20 years since the 9/11 attacks. On Memorial Day, neoconservative spokesman and Senator Lindsey Graham, with an ear to ear grin, stood next to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and lied to the American people's faces. He [said](#) "nobody does more to protect America from radical Islam than our friends in Israel." He was lobbying his own country for another billion dollars in weaponry for the Israelis. Ironically, [Tel Aviv](#) has, for years, [supported](#) al Qaeda [during the war in Syria](#) against their common enemy in Damascus. So much for our 'greatest ally' in the Middle East.

From the beginning, the al Qaeda/terrorism issue was framed in a kind of unreality that shared little to no resemblance with the truth. At the time of the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda was only a few hundred men, formally backed by Ronald Regan against the Soviets, tucked away in Nangarhar Province. It was the U.S. and its allies that started this fight when we supported Israel's occupations, put troops on Saudi soil and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

And therefore, aside from dealing with those directly responsible for the attack, [whom the Taliban offered to hand over anyway](#), there was no need to become further bogged down in the region. As it would only kill exponentially more innocent people, create more enemies, more war, more blowback, and destroy our economy.

But we were ceaselessly told by our government that September 11th, 2001 changed everything. Under the spell of the [Cathedral](#), our society accordingly goosestepped into an

era of totalitarianism at home to defeat the artificially inflated threat abroad. And what do we have to show for it? [Record breaking “defense” budgets](#), unending mass surveillance, trillions of dollars in crushing debt, indefinite global wars against vaguely defined enemies, millions [killed](#) and [displaced](#), [torture prisons](#), [assassinations of American citizens](#), thousands of dead and maimed soldiers, a suicide epidemic among veterans, militarized police, hyper divisive fake corporate news, ongoing economic crises and moral decay. In the end, we sacrificed our character and our way of life. And none of it was necessary.

U.S. support for Israel is a travesty, a stain on our history and present. And because of our own corrupt, imperialist government, Americans are still in the line of fire as Tel Aviv continues to kill men, women, and children on our dime and in our name. We can no longer morally, financially, legally, or strategically afford to offer aid to a regional superpower [violating international law](#). Israel, an internationally notorious apartheid state, killing civilians, perpetually at war, armed with [nuclear weapons](#), and comfortably surrounded by friendly dictatorships, has received [well over \\$200 billion](#) in U.S. money, adjusted for inflation, since its founding. Netanyahu himself once [remarked](#), it is “absurd.”

As Jason Ditz, news editor at Antiwar.com, [points out](#), “Israel’s relationship to the US has long centered around intense lobbying and getting embarrassingly large amounts of military aid (\$58 billion in 20 years, more than all other US aid recipients combined).”

Israel uses its American taxpayer-funded, state of the art military to subjugate Palestinians, stealing their property in East Jerusalem and the West Bank while bombing those held prisoner in the Gaza concentration camp. Israel is also constantly attacking its [neighbors](#), such as [Syria](#), whom the Israelis conduct [airstrikes](#) against on a [weekly basis](#).

It is a supreme disservice to the victims of 9/11, their memory, and their survivors, to continue down this road, year after year, still funding Israel’s atrocities and fighting the endless Middle East wars. It is time for the American people to not only renounce Washington’s permanent war agenda but emphatically refuse to foot the bill for Israel’s crimes against humanity.

Or have we learned nothing?

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