

# This Is Not a War Against Hamas. “Our War is Your War” Says Netanyahu. It is a Joint US-Israel Operation

The notion that the war would end if Hamas was overthrown or surrenders is as ahistorical as it is false.

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*The events of the past week should obliterate any doubt that the war against the Palestinians of Gaza is a joint U.S.-Israeli operation.*

On Friday, as the Biden administration stood alone among the nations of the world in vetoing a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, Secretary of State Antony Blinken was busy circumventing congressional review to ram through [approval](#) of an “emergency” sale of 13,000 tank rounds to Israel. For weeks, Blinken has been zipping across the Middle East and appearing on scores of television networks in a PR tour aimed at selling the world the notion that the White House is deeply concerned about the fate of Gaza’s 2.2 million residents.

“Far too many Palestinians have been killed; far too many have suffered these past weeks, and we want to do everything possible to prevent harm to them,” Blinken declared on November 10.

A month later, with the death toll skyrocketing and calls for a ceasefire mounting, Blinken assured the world Israel was implementing new measures to protect civilians and that the U.S. was doing everything it could to encourage Israel to employ a tiny bit more moderation in its widespread killing campaign. Friday’s events decisively flushed those platitudes into a swirling pool of blood.

Over the past two months, Benjamin Netanyahu has argued, including on U.S. news channels, “Our war is your war.” In retrospect, this wasn’t a plea to the White House.

Netanyahu was stating a fact. From the moment President Joe Biden spoke to his “great, great friend” Netanyahu on October 7, in the immediate aftermath of the deadly Hamas-led raids into Israel, the U.S. has not just supplied Israel with additional weapons and intelligence support, it has also offered crucial political cover for the scorched-earth campaign to annihilate Gaza as a Palestinian territory. It is irrelevant what words of concern and caution have flowed from the mouths of administration officials when all of their actions have been aimed at increasing the death and destruction.

The propaganda from the Biden administration has been so extreme at times that even the Israeli military has [suggested](#) they tone it down a notch or two. Biden falsely [claimed](#) to see images of “terrorists beheading children” and then knowingly relayed that [unverified](#) allegation as fact — including over the objections of his advisers — and publicly questioned the death toll of Palestinian civilians. None of this is by accident, nor can it be attributed to the president’s propensity to exaggerate or stumble into gaffes.

Everything we know about Biden’s 50-year history of supporting and facilitating Israel’s worst crimes and abuses leads to one conclusion: Biden wants Israel’s destruction of Gaza — with more than 7,000 children dead — to unfold as it has.

## Israel’s Dystopian Game Show

The horrifying nature of the October 7 attacks led by Hamas do not in any way — morally or legally — justify what Israel has done to the civilian population of Gaza, more than 18,000 of whom have died in a 60-day period. Nothing justifies the killing of children on an industrial scale. What the Israeli state is engaged in has far surpassed any basic principles of proportionality or legality. Israel’s own crimes dwarf those of Hamas and the other groups that participated in the October 7 operations. Yet Biden and other U.S. officials continue to defend the indefensible by rolling out their well-worn and twisted notion of Israel’s right to “self-defense.”



If we apply that rationale — promoted by both the U.S. and Israel — to the 75 years of history before October 7, how many times throughout that period would the Palestinians have been “justified” in massacring thousands of Israeli children, systematically attacking its hospitals and schools? How many times would they have been acting in “self-defense” as they razed whole neighborhoods to rubble, transforming the apartment buildings Israeli civilians once called home into concrete tombs? This justification only works for Israel because the Palestinians can enact no such destruction upon Israel and its people. It has no army, no navy, no air force, no powerful nation states to provide it with the most modern and lethal military hardware. It does not have hundreds of nuclear weapons. Israel can burn Gaza and its people to the ground because the U.S. facilitates it, politically and militarily.

Despite all the airtime consumed by Blinken and other U.S. officials playing make-believe on the issue of protecting Palestinian civilians, what has unfolded on the ground is nothing less than a corralling of the population of Gaza into an ever-shrinking killing cage. On December 1, Israel released an interactive map of Gaza dividing it into hundreds of numbered zones. On the Israel Defense Forces' Arabic language website, it encouraged Gaza's residents to scan a QR code to download the map and to monitor IDF channels to know when they need to evacuate to a different zone to avoid being murdered by Israeli bombs or ground operations. This is nothing short of a dystopian Netflix show produced by Israel in which its participants have no choice to opt out and a wrong guess will get you and your children maimed or killed. On a basic level, it is grotesque to tell an entrapped population that has limited access to food, water, health care, or housing — and whose internet connections have repeatedly been shut down — to go online to download a survival map from a military force that is terrorizing them.

Throughout Blinken's one-man parade proclaiming that the U.S. had made clear to Israel that it needs to protect civilians, Israel has [repeatedly](#) struck areas of Gaza to which it had told residents to flee. In some cases, the IDF sent SMS messages to people just 10 minutes before attacking. One such [message](#) read: "The IDF will begin a crushing military attack on your area of residence with the aim of eliminating the terrorist organization Hamas." U.N. Secretary General António Guterres [said](#) Palestinians were being treated "like human pinballs - ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival." Blinken [attributed](#) the continuously mounting pile of Palestinian corpses to "a gap" between Israel's stated intent to lessen civilian deaths and its operations. "I think the intent is there," he [said](#). "But the results are not always manifesting themselves."

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby got visibly irritated when asked on December 6 about Israel's widespread killing of civilians.

"It is not the Israeli Defense Forces strategy to kill innocent people. It's happening. I admit that. Each one is a tragedy," he [said](#). "But it's not like the Israelis are sitting around every morning and saying 'Hey, how many more civilians can we kill today?' 'Let's go bomb a school or a hospital or a residential building and just—and cause civilian casualties.' They're not doing that."

One problem with Kirby's rant is that attacks against civilians, schools, and hospitals are exactly what Israel is doing—repeatedly. It is irrelevant what Kirby *believes* the IDF's intent to be. For two months, numerous Israeli officials and lawmakers have said that their intent is to collectively strangle the Palestinians of Gaza into submission, death, or flight.



Dr Suleiman Qaoud surveys the damage at the Rantisi Specialist Hospital, part of the Nasser Medical Complex in Gaza City, following Israeli missile attacks on November 6, 2023 [Abdelhakim Abu Riash/Al Jazeera]

Kirby's claims are also decimated by the revelations in a recent [investigative report](#) by the Israeli media outlets 972 and Local Call. The story, based on interviews with seven Israeli military and intelligence sources, described in detail how Israel knows precisely the number of civilians present in buildings it strikes and at times has knowingly killed hundreds of Palestinian civilians in order to kill a single top Hamas commander.

“Nothing happens by accident,” one Israeli source said. “When a 3-year-old girl is killed in a home in Gaza, it’s because someone in the army decided it wasn’t a big deal for her to be killed — that it was a price worth paying in order to hit [another] target. We are not Hamas. These are not random rockets. Everything is intentional. We know exactly how much collateral damage there is in every home.”

As Israel ratchets up its killing machine, giving lie to all of Blinken's pronouncements, it continues to wage a propaganda war that is consistent with its overarching campaign of mass killing. No lie is too obscene to justify the wholesale slaughter of people that Israel's defense minister has called “human animals.” According to this campaign, there are no Palestinian children, no Palestinian hospitals, no Palestinian schools. The U.N. is Hamas. Journalists are Hamas. The prime ministers of Belgium, Spain, and Ireland are Hamas. Everything and everyone who dissents in the slightest from the genocidal narrative is Hamas.

Israel has quite understandably grown accustomed to many Western media outlets accepting its lies — no matter how outrageous or vile — when they are told about Palestinians. But even news outlets with a long track record of promoting Israel's narrative unchecked have inched toward incredulity. Not because they have had a change of conscience, but because the Israeli propaganda is so farcical that it would be embarrassing

to pretend it is otherwise.

Israeli forces have distributed multiple images and videos in recent days of Palestinian men stripped to their underwear — sometimes wearing blindfolds — and claimed they are all Hamas terrorists surrendering. These claims, too, fell apart under the most minimal scrutiny: Some of the men have been identified as journalists, shop owners, U.N. employees. In one particularly ridiculous piece of propaganda, a video filmed by IDF soldiers and distributed online depicted naked Palestinian captives laying down their alleged rifles.

Government spokesperson Mark Regev defended the practice of stripping detainees.

“Remember, it’s the Middle East and it’s warmer here. Especially during the day when it’s sunny, to be asked to take off your shirt might not be pleasant, but it’s not the end of the world,” Regev told [Sky News](#). “We are looking for people who would have concealed weapons, especially suicide bombers with explosive vests.”

Regev was asked about this clear violation of the Geneva Conventions’s prohibition against publishing videos of prisoners of war.

“I’m not familiar with that level of international law,” he said, adding (as though it matters) that he did not believe the videos were distributed by official Israeli government channels. “These are military aged men who were arrested in a combat zone,” he said.

Despite Israeli claims of mass surrenders by Hamas fighters, Haaretz [reported](#) that “of the hundreds of Palestinian detainees photographed handcuffed in the Gaza Strip in recent days, about 10 to 15 percent are Hamas operatives or are identified with the organization,” according to Israeli security sources. Israel has produced no evidence to support its claim that even this alleged small pool of the stripped prisoners were Hamas guerrillas.

So what we have here is both a violation of the Geneva Conventions and an immoral production in which Palestinian civilians are forced at gunpoint to play Hamas fighters in an Israeli propaganda movie.

## No Path of Resistance

It has become indisputably clear over these past two months that there are not actually two sides to this horror show. Without question, the perpetrators who meted out the horrors against Israeli civilians on October 7 should be held accountable. But that is not what this collective killing operation is about. And journalists should stop pretending it is.

Any analysis of the Israeli state’s terror campaign against the people of Gaza cannot begin with the events of October 7. An honest examination of the current situation must view October 7 in the context of Israel’s 75-year war against the Palestinians and the past two decades of transforming Gaza first into an open-air prison and now into a killing cage. Under threat of being labeled antisemitic, Israel and its defenders demand acceptance of Israel’s official rationale for its irrational actions as legitimate, even if they are demonstrably false or they seek to justify war crimes.

“You look at Israel today. It’s a state that has reached such a degree of irrational, rabid lunacy that its government routinely accuses its closest allies of supporting terrorism,” the Palestinian analyst Mouin Rabbani recently told [Intercepted](#). “It is a state that has

become thoroughly incapable of any form of inhibition.”

Israel has imposed, by lethal force, a rule that Palestinians have no legitimate rights of any form of resistance. When they have organized [nonviolent demonstrations](#), they have been attacked and killed. That was the case in 2018-2019 when Israeli forces opened fire on unarmed protesters during the Great March of Return, killing 223 and wounding more than 8,000 others. Israeli snipers later [boasted](#) about shooting dozens of protesters in the knee during the weekly Friday demonstrations. When Palestinians fight back against apartheid soldiers, they are killed or sent into military tribunals. Children who throw rocks at tanks or soldiers are labeled terrorists and subjected to abuse and violations of basic rights — that is, if they are not summarily shot dead. Palestinians live their lives stripped of any context or any recourse to address the grave injustices imposed on them.

Image: Members of the Hamas al-Qassam Brigade (EPA-EFE/Mohammed Saber via Euractiv)



You cannot discuss the crimes of Hamas or Islamic jihad or any other armed resistance factions without first addressing the question of why these groups exist and have support. One aspect of this should certainly probe Netanyahu’s own role — extending back to at least 2012 — in propping up Hamas and [facilitating](#) the flow of money to the group.

“Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas,” Netanyahu [told](#) his Likud comrades in 2019.

But in the broader sense, a sincere examination of why a group such as Hamas gained popularity among Palestinians or why people in Gaza turn to armed struggle must focus on how the oppressed, when stripped of all forms of legitimate resistance, respond to the oppressor. It should be focused on the rights of people living under occupation to assert and defend their self-determination. It should allow Palestinians to have their struggle placed in the context of other historical battles for liberation and independence and not relegated to racist polemics about how all Palestinian acts of resistance constitute terrorism and there are not really any innocents in Gaza. Israel’s president said as much on October 13.

“It is an entire nation out there that is responsible,” Isaac Herzog [declared](#). “It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not being aware, not involved. It’s absolutely not true. They could have risen up. They could have fought against that evil regime which took over Gaza in a coup d’etat.”

The notion that the Palestinians of Gaza could end all of their suffering by overthrowing Hamas is just as ahistorical and false as the oft-repeated claims that the war against Gaza would end if Hamas surrendered and released all Israeli hostages.

“Look, this could be over tomorrow,” Blinken [said](#) December 10. “If Hamas got out of the way of civilians instead of hiding behind them, if it put down its weapons, if it surrendered.”

That, of course, is a crass lie. With or without Hamas, Israel’s war against the Palestinians would endure precisely because of Blinken and his ilk in elite bipartisan U.S. foreign policy circles.

Throughout the years of U.S. support for Israel’s apartheid regime, it has consistently facilitated Israel’s “[mowing the grass](#)” in Gaza. This is not a series of periodic assaults on Hamas — it is a cyclical campaign of terror bombings largely aimed at civilians and civilian infrastructure. The Biden administration is not — and Biden personally has never been — an outside observer or a friend encouraging moderation during an otherwise righteous crusade. None of this slaughter would be occurring if Biden valued Palestinian lives over Israel’s false narratives and its bloody ethnonationalist wars of annihilation repackaged as self-defense. We should end the charade that this is an Israeli war against Hamas. We should call it what it is: a joint U.S.-Israeli war against the people of Gaza.

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