

The View from Washington: Let the Killing in Gaza Continue

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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Bloodletting as form; murder as fashion. The ongoing campaign in Gaza by Israel's Defence Forces continues without stalling and restriction. But the burgeoning number of corpses is starting to become a challenge for the propaganda outlets: How to justify it? Fortunately for Israel, the United States, its unqualified defender, is happy to provide cover for murder covered in the sheath of self-defence.

Such cover also takes the form of false fairness and forced balance.

"We don't have to choose between defending Israel and aiding Palestinian civilians," Secretary of State Antony Blinken [wrote](#) in the *Washington Post* on October 31. "We can and must do both. That is the only way to stand firmly by one of our closest allies, protecting innocent lives, uphold the international rules of the road that ultimately benefit the American people, and preserve the sole viable path to lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians: two states for two peoples."

Given that innocent lives are being taken with mechanistic ruthlessness, international laws broken with impunity, and any remnant of a Palestinian state being liquidated, Blinken seemingly inhabits a parallel universe of mind-bending cynicism.

The latest attempt to halt hostilities came in the form of an intervention by UN Secretary-General António Guterres under the auspices of Article 99 of the UN Charter. The article grants the secretary-general the liberty to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."

In his December 6 [letter](#) to the members of the Security Council, Guterres gives a brief

account of the conflict, commencing on October 7. After noting the death of 1,200 Israelis and 250 abductions (130 are still being held in captivity in Gaza), the focus shifts to the death of over 15,000 individuals in the strip itself, “more than 40 per cent of whom were children.” Somewhere in the order of 80 per cent of the population of 2.2 million residents in Gaza had been displaced, with 1.1 million seeking refuge in UNRWA facilities across the strip “creating overcrowded, undignified, and unhygienic conditions.” The provision of viable health care had all but ceased, with 14 hospitals of 36 facilities “partially functional.” Overall, Gaza was facing “a severe risk of collapse of the humanitarian system.”

The secretary-general concludes his note by urging the Security Council members “to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe” and seek a “humanitarian ceasefire”. But on December 8, Washington [predictably sabotaged](#) the passage of the follow up resolution, which had been proposed by the United Arab Emirates. (Thirteen countries voted for the measure; with the United Kingdom abstaining.) The resolution demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and ensuring humanitarian access.

The US deputy ambassador to the UN Robert A. Wood, [claimed](#) that he and the delegation had “engaged in good faith on the text.” But “nearly all” of Washington’s recommendations had been ignored, resulting in “an unbalanced resolution divorced from reality on the ground.” Again, a sticking point was the omission in the draft of any reference to Hamas’s attack on October 7, Israel’s right to self-defence, and reference to any permission for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to access and provide medical treatment to the hostages still being held by Hamas.

With the gloves off, Wood made it clear that, in solidarity with Israel, the US will not countenance the continued existence of Hamas. “The resolution retains a call for an unconditional ceasefire – this is not only unrealistic but dangerous; it will simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on 7 October.”

While Israel’s UN ambassador, Gilad Erdan, was not present to address the Security Council, he [subsequently affirmed](#) the blood curdling, unending mission his country has embarked upon.

“A ceasefire will only be possible only with the return of all the hostages and the destruction of Hamas.”

As this farcical theatre of constipated morality unfolded, the Biden administration was happy to beef up the Israeli war machine by asking Congress to urgently [approve the sale](#) of 45,000 shells for the IDF’s Merkava tanks to aid its offensive in Gaza. The sale, worth around \$500 million, does not form part of Biden’s \$110.5 billion supplemental request that covers funding for both Ukraine and Israel.

In pursuing such a course of action, be it defending Israel’s policies in the Security Council, or via armaments, the US is effectively colluding in the perpetration of crimes against humanity. This was certainly the view of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who said in a [statement](#) released by his office that

“the American position is aggressive and immoral, a flagrant violation of all humanitarian principles and values, and holds the United States responsible for the bloodshed of Palestinian children, women and elderly people in the Gaza Strip”.

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Agnès Callamard also [expressed the view](#) that the US, in vetoing the resolution, had "displayed a callous disregard for civilian suffering in the face of a staggering death toll, extensive destruction and an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe happening in the occupied Gaza Strip." Washington had "brazenly wielded and weaponized its veto to strongarm the UN Security Council, further undermining its credibility and ability to live up to its mandate to maintain international peace and security." Not that it had much credibility to begin with.

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Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He currently lectures at RMIT University. He is a regular contributor to Global Research and Asia-Pacific Research. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

Featured image: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, Oct. 12, 2023. - Secretary Antony Blinken on X

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