**[Crisis of humanity](https://www.dawn.com/news/1790838/crisis-of-humanity)**

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THE world watched in horror when Israeli forces [attacked Al Shifa hospital](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789492) in Gaza in another atrocity committed by a barbaric occupying power. Backed by tanks, the ground assault rained down terror on terrified patients at the hospital, endangering the lives of people, including thousands of civilians sheltering there.

Eyewitnesses spoke of Israeli soldiers destroying medical equipment, interrogating medical staff at gunpoint as well as stripping, blindfolding and detaining people, who were taken to unknown locations. Its pretext for the raid was that the hospital was a base for Hamas — a patent lie. No credible evidence was produced for the claim that, in any case, did not justify the hospital attack, prohibited by international humanitarian law.

As the horrific invasion of the hospital unfolded condemnations came from countries across the world. UN officials, global aid and human rights organisations slammed the action.

Both the UN’s relief chief Martin Griffiths and head of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said, “Hospitals are not battlegrounds”, and that “protection of newborns, patients, medical staff and all civilians must override all other concerns”. As global criticism mounted, the White House denied it gave Israel a green light for the military raid.

A day earlier a US administration spokesman announced it had intelligence information that supported Israeli claims of Hamas using Al Shifa hospital for its military operations. But he offered no substantiation.

Subsequently, President Joe Biden defended the raid despite global outrage at the action and without providing proof that the hospital was a Hamas command centre.

The raid on Al Shifa took place in the sixth week of Israel’s war on Gaza which has left over 11,500 Palestinians dead, including 4,600 children. Over 1.5 million people have been forcibly displaced. Despite the growing global clamour for a ceasefire, US refusal to support a truce has stood in the way of bringing hostilities to an end.

At the UN, the Security Council considered another resolution to address the humanitarian dimension of the war. After four failed attempts to pass a resolution, a fifth draft was moved by Malta calling for “urgent and extended humanitarian pauses” in Gaza for “a sufficient number of days” to allow full and unhindered access for UN agencies and partners.

It was adopted by 12 votes of the 15-member Security Council. The US and UK abstained as the resolution did not condemn Hamas. Russia abstained as it did not provide for a ceasefire.

Humanitarian ‘pauses’ will not halt the genocide and forced displacement perpetrated by Israel. They are no substitute for a ceasefire. Ostensibly aimed at protecting civilians especially children, these pauses can only provide narrow windows to get humanitarian aid into Gaza. But as Israel has long defied UNSC resolutions, Tel Aviv is unlikely to abide by it even though it is legally binding.

The Israeli ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan denounced the resolution as “meaningless”, indicating his country will not comply with it. The Palestinian envoy Riyad Mansour expressed his disappointment with the resolution stressing that what was needed was a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. The Security Council’s first action since the war began failed to match the catastrophic situation on the ground.

The international community has failed the people of Gaza.

Nevertheless, with Israel escalating deadly bombings in Gaza, intensifying raids into the West Bank and Palestinian casualties mounting, the White House came under growing pressure from dissent within the US administration, public protests demanding a ceasefire and growing disquiet among its allies.

French President Emmanuel Macron called for a ceasefire and said Israel must stop bombing and killing babies and women in Gaza. Cracks in the G7 were also evident from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s call to Israel to end the “killing of women, of children, of babies” in the besieged Gaza Strip.

However, this has yet to affect Washington’s unconditional backing for Israel. This was evident from Biden’s remarks at his presser after the meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in San Francisco. He reiterated his opposition to a ceasefire and defended Israel’s military campaign. He again accused Hamas of beheading babies, even though earlier reports of this proved to be totally false, which the White House too had acknowledged.

He also said Israel’s war in Gaza will only end when the military capacity of Hamas is degraded. Any hope that the US would restrain Israel seemed to fade by these pronouncements. This despite poll findings in the US that indicate most Americans want a ceasefire. A [*Reuters*/Ipsos poll found](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789729) over two-thirds of people backed a ceasefire and that support for Israel was waning.

A striking aspect of the war has been the extent of disinformation and deliberate lies Israeli leaders and its military have spread, which have been echoed unquestionably by much of the Western media. Worse, some publications have totally disregarded Palestinian casualties, with few exceptions.

*The Economist* [argued](https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/11/02/why-israel-must-fight-on) that Israel must fight on, regardless of the civilian death toll and disingenuously described a ceasefire as an “enemy of peace”. Other news publications justified Israel’s relentless, brutal bombardments of refugee camps and hospitals as its ‘right to defend itself’. The dehumanisation of Palestinians has characterised much of the coverage by the Western media.

With their sentiments inflamed by nonstop bloodshed in Gaza, Muslim publics across the world weren’t surprised by the Western media’s biased coverage as that was nothing new. Their deep disappointment lay with Arab governments who, beyond issuing condemnations, acted as little more than spectators to a genocide and epic humanitarian catastrophe.

Reports that some Arab countries opposed and prevented even minimal actions proposed by other states, which could have mounted significant diplomatic pressure on Israel and the US, only added to the popular discontent. Inaction by Arab and Muslim governments represented in the OIC was widely seen as a betrayal of the Palestinians. But then, it is the entire international community that has failed the people of Gaza.

It has singularly failed in its response to what UN Secretary General António Guterres has called a “crisis of humanity”.

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