**[Rift over Rafah](https://www.dawn.com/news/1822643/rift-over-rafah)**

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THE Israeli genocide in Gaza has stretched into Ramazan. The unspeakable horrors that have been visited upon the Palestinians have now led to the boundaries being blurred between fasting and [famine](https://www.dawn.com/news/1822630/gaza-hunger-warnings-grow-as-hopes-build-for-ceasefire); with many seeing no end to the hunger that ends at dusk for all other fasting Muslims. The equivalent of three nuclear bombs have been dropped on Gazans since last October. Over 31,000 Palestinians have been [killed](https://www.dawn.com/news/1822197) and more than 70,000 injured — many left with no arms or no legs.

The US, as Zionist-fed American politicians have long been proud to proclaim, continues to stand by Israel. The promise was repeated like a nauseating chant in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth month of the war, even when hospitals were bombed, even when the International Court of Justice declared that Israel had to prevent a genocide, even when reel after reel from every corner of Gaza showed small children being maimed, shell-shocked, shivering, and left orphaned and without food.

Then the electoral primaries for the American presidential elections began. If there is anything that the administration loves more than Israel and the dollars they reap from the Israeli lobbyists of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, it is to be in power. In this case, Joe Biden, the incumbent, does not have to battle a challenger in the primary elections. Technically, therefore the primaries should have meant little more to him than a perfunctory rite of passage. So it would have been, were it not for the war in Gaza and the unpredictable shift of a younger generation of American voters away from Israel.

This year the shift was seen in voting patterns. Rashida Tlaib the only Palestinian-American Congresswoman in the US House of Repre­sen­tatives, who represents Michigan state’s 12th congressional district, including the city of Dearborn where the majority of residents are Arab American, signed onto the ‘uncommitted’ campaign.

The campaign, led by the advocates of a ceasefire in Gaza, asked Democratic voters to deliberately vote ‘uncommitted’ in the Demo­cratic primary to register their protest against American policies on Israel. When Michigan went to vote, 13 per cent of the state’s Democratic primary voters voted [’uncommitted](https://www.dawn.com/news/1817885)’. Even then, when Biden, who won the Democratic primary in Michigan, issued an official statement that evening, he did not mention either the uncommitted vote or the Palestinians.

If the Democrats running Biden’s campaign paid little attention to the growing groundswell of anger towards the administration’s support for Israel’s genocide, the state primaries that followed have now forced them to focus. Even in a state like North Carolina, where there is no bastion of Muslim-Americans like in Michigan, 12pc voted uncommitted/ no preference in the Democratic primary as did 9pc in Massachusetts.

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When it was the turn of Minnesota, where the constituency of Somali-American Congress­woman Ilhan Omar lies, 19pc voted ‘uncommitted’. The numbers have shown that the ‘uncommitted’ campaign had support beyond Muslim voters and among the young voters and progressives that the Biden administration desperately needs on its side if it is to beat Donald Trump in the general election in November. Add to this the African American voters who, polls show, see Gaza and Israeli discrimination as a civil rights issue and it would spell the end of the Democrats and of Biden.

Suddenly, it appears that Biden’s tune towards Israel has changed. As these results and probably the Biden campaign’s own polling results have shown, Muslims and Arab Americans along with younger voters were strongly opposed to the carte blanche that the Biden administration seemed to have handed Netanyahu and his camp of genocidal maniacs. These were warning shots — the lethal ones could come in November when all of the uncommitted stayed home and let the Trump camp sail to victory. Trump, for his part has expressed his support for Israel, but given the isolationist tendencies of his supporters it remains to be seen if he would be entirely okay with slashing billions from the Israeli coffers without much ado.

Instantly, the US began to press Israel into a ceasefire prior to the beginning of Ramazan. When this did not happen, their [displeasure](https://www.dawn.com/news/1822420) was clear. When Israel said that it would pursue a [ground invasion](https://www.dawn.com/news/1821359) of Rafah, the border town where hundreds of thousands of desperate Palestinians are crammed together in terrible conditions, the US warned Israel that it was making a mistake.

The Netanyahu administration said it would pursue the campaign regardless, but this has led to an escalation of public annoyance from the American side. When Biden made his State of the Union address, he focused on the fact that aid had to get to Gaza (even though the solution he offered of an impractical fantastic “pier” for Gaza to “receive large ships carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelters” is unworkable).

Then to show that the elected branches of the Democrats were together on this, Senate majority leader Democrat Chuck Schumer, the highest-ranking Jewish member of the US government, demanded new elections in Israel in his speech from the Senate floor. “The Netanyahu coalition no longer fits the needs of Israel after Oct 7,” he said. While the US forces this on many countries, it was the first time their darling Israel received such instructions — and at a time while it is at war and has a national unity government.

So far, the Biden administration’s ‘anger’ has been all talk. No policy has been changed and no arms shipments have been stalled or slashed. This, however, is exactly the complaint that the ‘uncommitted’ voters have against the Biden government. It may take more than talk to convince them to come out to vote in November, and Biden desperately needs them to do so.

In the meantime, the rhetoric against Israeli actions is as loud as it has ever been in the US and for now that may mean that those suffering in Rafah will not have bombs falling on them for some time.

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