**Genocide in Gaza**

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Diplomatic moves on Sunday failed to put a stop to Israel’s air and land strikes on occupied Palestinian land due, in large part, to American complicity. This was seen over the weekend when the US, for a third time, vetoed a joint statement by the UN Security Council that would have condemned Israeli aggression while calling for a ceasefire to the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip.

The crisis has now entered its second week and according to recent reports, Israel has killed close to 200 Palestinians, 58 of whom were children. Underscoring the immense imbalance of power, Palestinian retaliation claimed 10 lives, including two children.

This recent and ongoing violence, given the historical context of Palestinian bloodshed, is tantamount to genocide and is once more being openly supported by the US. Indeed, President Joe Biden recklessly told reporters last week that “thus far there has not been a significant overreaction” from the Israelis. The EU was quick to denounce Palestinian retaliation, while some of its member states talked about Israel’s right to self-defence. Meanwhile, three UNSC non-permanent members — Estonia, Norway and Ireland — along with P5 member France issued their own statement in which they condemned rocket fire by Hamas and other groups, while also denouncing civilians casualties from both sides. They also called on Israel to cease settlement activities, demolitions and evictions, including in (occupied) East Jerusalem. Meanwhile Washington’s envoy reached in the Middle East “to seek to calm tensions between Israel and the Palestinians”. He has met some of the governments in the region while strikes on Palestine continue.

In reality, of course, the Palestinians had simply been protesting a police raid on Al-Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam, as well as the forced eviction of four families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem. Palestinians have faced multiple expulsion orders filed by pro-settler organisations dating as far back as 1972.

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Washington has been fuelling violence against Palestine for decades now by strengthening Israel with huge strategic, diplomatic, military, technical and financial aid. According to the US-based think tank Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, through FY 2020, the US has provided Israel with $146 billion in military, economic and missile defence funding. Thus, America has much Palestinian blood on its hands.

The US is playing the same deadly game in South Asia, with its ally India in -held Kashmir. Washington has therefore become a nation heavily involved in crimes against humanity. It should be checked by a multilateral defence mechanism. After all, if NATO exists why can the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) not have its own force? Or else gather an even larger number of nations to create a bloc to counter US military interventions around the world. A real bipolar world order is the urgent need of the hour.

The OIC has condemned Israeli attack on Palestine yet again. Is it enough or should the bloc representing the Muslim world go beyond mere rhetoric? Certainly, the OIC has to devise an action plan to check and monitor anti-Muslim violence globally. It should also seek support from other friendly countries as well as those that oppose the US-Israel alliance. Only a strong OIC can serve the objective of peace for Muslims. Or else we will all be reminded of the famous Albert Einstein quote: “The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.”

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