**[If not now, when?](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789462/if-not-now-when)**

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AMID all the horrors on show as a consequence of Israel’s explicit determination to pulverise the Gaza Strip, nothing is quite as soul-searing as the tiny white shrouds. In one instance, a newborn’s non-existence was acknowledged with a death certificate before a birth certificate could be processed.

The world occasionally wrings its hands and whispers banal platitudes about protecting civilian lives, but refuses to demand a ceasefire. The US and its acolytes can barely pluck up the nerve to call for ‘humanitarian pauses’ — a brief and fairly meaningless hiatus before the baby killers once more flex their fingers around the triggers.

Alongside the Netanyahu regime, the chief culprit is the American political, military and corporate establishment. If it so desired, the US could have restrained Israel’s genocidal impulses long ago — or, at least belatedly, last month. It chose, instead, to offer additional lethal weaponry and littoral cover via aircraft carriers.

Within the US, meanwhile, pro-Palestinian protesters are routinely being branded as fans of Hamas, even if they happen to be Jewish. Donors are withdrawing their support from universities and other institutions unless they effectively criminalise any manifestations of empathy for Palestinian lives.

Dissenters against the Zionist credo are losing their jobs. The Israel lobby is determined to dislodge any legislators who diverge from its desired path of unquestioning acquiescence to the Jewish state’s nastiest Nazi-like inclinations.

Insistence on a ceasefire might halt the genocide.

Michigan congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian in the House of Representatives, has been targeted. Her comrades in the Squad have stood by her, and several of them will face challenges next year from rivals funded by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

But Aipac and its allies such as the Anti-Defamation League are also at war against fellow Jews who don’t bite the Zionist bullet, notably groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now, which have coordinated many of the regular demonstrations in New York and elsewhere that have challenged Israeli impunity.

It’s not just younger American Jews who don’t feel obliged to ally themselves with a state that no longer bothers to conceal its fascist fangs. There are similar trends in Europe, where countries such as Germany and France were among the first to crack down on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, outlawing the Palestinian flag in some instances.

Suella Braverman, the British home secretary until this week, failed to do the same; although her dog-whistle to the far right to disrupt last Saturday’s rally in London — after police refused to ban it — proved effective, and swelled the number of protesters.

Braverman, whose extremist predilections make some of her Tory colleagues seem undeservedly moderate, was sacked on Monday. By inducting former prime minister David Cameron as the new foreign secretary, Rishi Sunak must have been hoping to distract popular attention away from his government’s irredeemable disarray.

Unless he’s toppled before the next election, he is more than likely to make way at Downing Street for Keir Starmer, whose stint as Labour appears to be based on taking instructions from the Israeli embassy.

He’ll still win the next election, given the Conservative Party’s evolving meltdown, but less convincingly than he would have without unequivocally latching onto the Zionist trajectory. Joe Biden is in a somewhat different position.

He needs every vote he can get, and appears to have lost the reluctant backing of Arabs, Muslims and progressives amo­ng the Democrats. His likely 2024 ri­­val, the appalling Donald Trump, knows that his electoral base is immune to any kind of common sense. If the multitudes disenchanted with Biden don’t bother to vote, Trump will be king.

Perhaps that’s what America deserves. It’s on the wrong side of history — as it was 52 years ago, when it collaborated with the Yahya regime on the Bangladesh issue. Back then there was little popular opposition in the West to the military massacre in the East, which was excused by reference to militant brutality against non-Bengalis. Neither Gaza nor the West Bank, though, enjoys East Pakistan’s geographical advantage.

Much of the Global South has demanded a ceasefire in Gaza, but Israel can ignore that. The ummah is as impotent as the UN, although the latter is at least making the right kind of efforts. The Gaza death toll is already multiple times the level of Hamas’s atrocities.

Many of the countries that did nothing to avert the Holocaust or the Nakba that followed are also doing nothing to stop what several members of Netanyahu’s government have designated as the 2023 Nakba, which involves not just mass killings but the prospect of mass expulsion too.

Meanwhile, the tiny white shrouds pile up. What a wonderful world.

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