**[Shameful capitulation](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789465/shameful-capitulation)**

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THERE had never been many expectations from the Arab countries to stand up in support of the Palestinian people living under occupation. After all, many of them have made peace with the Zionist state of Israel. But one had hoped that the ongoing atrocities committed by Israeli forces in Gaza would have shaken them out of their slumber. Unfortunately, that has not happened.

While Israel continues to kill children and newborn babies in attacks on hospitals in Gaza, the Muslim world has chosen not to go beyond statements of condemnation. The [joint resolution](https://www.dawn.com/news/1788627), issued after the emergency summit meeting of the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Riyadh last week, is yet another shameful act of betrayal of the hapless Palestinian population who are facing a genocide. Their inaction virtually makes these countries abettors in the mass killings being carried out by the Zionist forces in Gaza.

Last week, leaders of Arab and other predominantly Muslim countries met as Israel’s attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip killed more than 11,000 people, more than half of them women and children.

Yet they could not agree on even a minimum plan of action against Israeli aggression and war crimes. Such inaction by the Muslim world has certainly given the Zionist state, which has the tacit support of the United States and some other Western countries, free rein to commit the worst war crimes.

Earlier, according to some media reports in the Arab world, four “influential countries” in the Arab League had been instrumental in preventing the adoption of concrete plans of action against Israel, and, instead, proposed vague clauses.

Apparently, “the divisive clauses were believed to have included prohibiting the use of US and other military bases in Arab countries to supply Israel with weapons and ammunition; freezing Arab diplomatic, economic, security, and military relations with Israel; and threats to leverage oil and Arab economic capabilities to apply pressure and halt the ongoing aggression”.

The Muslim world cannot agree on even a minimum plan of action against Israel’s war crimes.

The Arab League and the OIC, a 57-member bloc, were initially supposed to hold separate meetings. But when the former failed to reach a consensus on a final settlement, it was decided to merge the meetings. While 11 of the 22 members of the Arab League supported the initially proposed action plan, the rest had either opposed the proposal or abstained from endorsing them.

The UAE and Bahrain, which had normalised ties with Israel, were among the countries who rejected the proposal, with Saudi Arabia and Egypt also believed to number among those opposing punitive measures against Israel.

In a watered-down joint resolution, the subsequent Arab-OIC summit only called for an end to the conflict in Gaza and rejected justifying Israel’s actions against Palestinians as self-defence.

The communique demanded a halt to the Gaza siege, the permitting of humanitarian aid into Gaza and stopping arms exports to Israel. However, the right of the Palestinian people to resist the Israeli occupation was not even mentioned, rendering the joint statement toothless.

This abandonment of the Palestinian people facing extermination by the Israeli killing machine is being linked to the undemocratic nature of the Arab regimes and their continuing political dependence on the US, which is complicit in Israel’s war crimes against Palestinian men, women and children.

The ordeal of the Palestinian people appears like an aberration in the Arab political order, with many states normalising relations with Israel despite its expansionist and apartheid policies.

Recently, the White House said that Saudi Arabia was [still interested in pursuing an agreement](https://www.dawn.com/news/1785687/saudi-arabia-tells-us-it-still-wants-normalisation-with-israel-but-links-talks-to-ceasefire) that would normalise relations with Israel after the war in Gaza ended. The assurance was given during the recent visit of the Saudi defence minister to Washington even as the attacks on Gaza continued. The kingdom had been close to recognising Israel as a part of a deal pushed by the Biden administration.

While some Arab countries, who had recognised Israel under the Abraham Accords brokered by the Trump administration in 2020, have recalled their ambassadors under growing public pressure at home, they have not severed relations altogether with the Zionist state.

Countries such as Egypt, which was the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with the Zionist state in 1979, and the UAE have continued to maintain diplomatic and economic relations with Tel Aviv.

In fact, South Africa and some South American countries including Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela and Brazil have taken a much stronger position against Israel than many of the Arab countries.

The unfolding genocide in Gaza has heightened public anger against the shameful capitulation by Arab governments. The relentless Israeli bombing that has not even spared hospitals, refugee camps and places of worship, has created an explosive situation in the Middle East that cannot be contained by the autocratic Arab rulers.

It is evident that the war has already extended to other parts in the region. It is likely to alter the political map of the Middle East. The warning signs for the Arab authoritarian regimes are tangible. Massive public protests across the globe against the Israeli war show the isolation of the Zionist state.

It has been over a month since Israel unleashed the war on Gaza that has completely devastated the territory, which is being described as a “hell on earth”. But it is far from achieving its goal of establishing full control over the Strip which is home to 2.2 million people.

The clock is ticking for Israel and also for the Arab states whose inaction is seen to abet Israel’s carnage. Calling for a ceasefire is important but there is a need to restore the rights of the Palestinian people and end the Israeli subjugation.

There is a US-backed move to force the entire population to leave Gaza and to be settled in Sinai in Egypt in what would be a second Nakba. That can only happen with the Egyptian leadership on board. The refusal of Arab countries to act more decisively has given a huge impetus to Israel’s war plans.

Instead of making perfunctory declarations, the Arab countries need to take de­­cisive action to stop the Zionist expansion which poses a grave danger to the entire region.

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