

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8278>



USA

# Israel-Palestine War Roils U.S. Politics Top to Bottom

- IV Online magazine - 2023 - IV585 - October 2023 -

Publication date: Monday 16 October 2023

---

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

---

**Hamas's attack on Israel, including murdering civilians, now followed by Israel's siege and bombardment of Gaza and the demand that over a million civilians immediately relocate has electrified American politics from top to bottom. As politicians debate policy, thousands of Americans have poured into the street to support Israel or Palestine, as the left divided over the issue.**

Democratic President Joe Biden immediately announced his support for Israel, at first without initially mentioning at all the safety of Palestinian civilians now under attack. A week after the war began, he called upon Israel not to reoccupy Gaza. dispatched two U.S. aircraft carrier strike groups, to the eastern Mediterranean near Israel. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin both visited Israel to express the U.S. commitment to back it with more military assistance. Israel receives more U.S. military aid than any other country and has received \$3 billion per year for the last ten years.

Blinken also met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in an attempt to keep the West Bank, also occupied by Israel, from erupting. And Blinken visited the surrounding Arab nations to try to prevent them from entering the war.

While Jews make up only 2.4% of the U.S. population, they make up 18 percent of New York City's population, and while not all Jews are Zionists, many have connections to and strong feeling for Israel. So not surprisingly New York State Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams joined large pro-Israel rallies in the city.

Senator Bernie Sanders, himself a Jew, declared that, "The United States has rightly offered solidarity and support to Israel in responding to Hamas' attack. But we must also insist on restraint from Israeli forces attacking Gaza and work to secure UN humanitarian access. Let us not forget that half of the 2 million people in Gaza are children. Children and innocent people do not deserve to be punished for the acts of Hamas." Sanders added, "The targeting of civilians is a war crime, no matter who does it. Israel's blanket denial of food, water, and other necessities to Gaza is a serious violation of international law and will do nothing but harm innocent civilians."

Members of the so-called Squad of progressive Democrats in Congress declined to express all out support for Israel. Cori Bush called for an end to U.S. aid to Israel, while Ilhan Omar called to end "unconditional" military aid, and Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian American, said "this heartbreaking cycle of violence will continue" unless the funds are cut off, but she did not criticize Hamas. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, who is from New York City, was more cautious, criticizing Hamas' attacks and urging "de-escalation" by both sides.

The Republican Party, involved in a paralyzing faction fight between its far-right and conservatives, has been unable to elect a speaker of the House of Representatives, preventing the passage of legislation for aid to Israel. The party's leading presidential candidate, former president Donald Trump, has been widely criticized by rival Republican candidates, for his remarks that, "I'll never forget that Bibi Netanyahu let us down," Trump said. "That was a very terrible thing."

At the same time there have been pro-Palestinian demonstrations involving Palestinian organizations, progressive Jewish groups, and leftist groups in cities and on university campuses across the country, though the left has been divided. Some protests have appeared to support Hamas, many declined to criticize Hamas, and at some there were not only anti-Zionist but also sometimes antisemitic slogans. Rightwing politicians and media have taken advantage of the situation to tar the left as supporters of terrorism.

## Israel-Palestine War Roils U.S. Politics Top to Bottom

---

The left is challenged to clarify its views on national liberation movements and on questions of unconditional but critical support of such movements.

16 October 2023

PS:

*If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint.* Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.