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Statement of the WSWS Editorial Board
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Global outrage erupts over Israeli bombing of Gaza hospital



Bodies of Palestinians killed by an Israeli airstrike at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital are gathered in the front yard of the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, central Gaza Strip, on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. (AP Photo/AbedKhaled) [AP Photo/Abed Khaled]

On Tuesday, the Israeli military dropped a massive GPS-guided bomb on the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital in Gaza City, killing more than 500 medical personnel, patients and refugees. The hospital, operated by the Anglican Christian Church, had been sheltering over 1,000 people who were displaced by the bombing. Doctors and medical staff at the hospital had courageously refused Israeli demands that they relocate further south, stating that there were not enough beds in southern Gaza to accommodate their critically wounded patients.

This atrocity has triggered mass protests by hundreds of thousands throughout the Middle East, Europe and America. Thousands rallied outside the White House, with banners accusing US President Joe Biden of genocide.

The Israeli government and US media have launched a campaign to promote the lie that the Palestinians bombed their own hospital. Israel denied responsibility for the bombing, claiming that the attack was caused by a rocket launched from Gaza that misfired. The entire world knows this is an absurd fabrication. This massacre was conducted by Israel, with the support of the US-NATO axis.

There is nothing accidental about the Gaza bombing. It is only the latest, and most heinous, in a string of dozens of attacks on hospitals, residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure over the past 10 days. It is entirely in keeping with Israel's strategy for the war, which is to terrorize the population by inflicting massive casualties and deaths.

On October 13, Israel dropped leaflets demanding that 1.1 million people leave northern Gaza. Israel has created a "free fire zone" in northern Gaza in which every man, woman and child is a target. The Atlantic Council, a pro-war US think tank, noted that Israeli bombings, which have killed over 3,000 people over the past 10 days, have targeted "specifically protected locations, including hospitals, markets, refugee camps, mosques, educational facilities, and entire neighborhoods."

It stated that Israel's "indiscriminate attacks on densely populated civilian areas and attacks lacking precautions violate IHL [international humanitarian law] and likely amount to war crimes. When carried out systematically or in a widespread manner, they may constitute crimes against humanity."

Just days before the attack, Israel fired "warning" shots at the hospital using live ammunition, according to Gaza's undersecretary of the Ministry of Health. Following the strike, the Israeli army demanded the hospital be evacuated, saying, "We warned you yesterday with two shells."

An Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman told CNN that Israel had "intercepted conversations" revealing that "they understand that it was a rocket that misfired." This reference to "intercepted conversations" immediately recalls Colin Powell's infamous 2003 speech before the UN, where he trumpeted "intercepted communications" as proving the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

In response to the attack, Biden wrote on Twitter, "I am outraged and deeply saddened by the explosion at the Al Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza, and the terrible loss of life that

resulted. The United States stands unequivocally for the protection of civilian life during conflict, and we mourn the patients, medical staff, and other innocents killed or wounded in this tragedy.”

What cynicism and hypocrisy!

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All the imperialist powers are implicated in this war crime. The attack on the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital was carried out only hours after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited with Netanyahu, declaring that Germany “has only one place... and that is alongside Israel.”

Cynically using German imperialism’s own crimes to justify Israel’s crimes, Scholz said that Germany’s “responsibility... for the Holocaust requires us to help maintain the security and existence of Israel.” As if the masses of Palestinians being bombed and starved to death had anything to do with the mass murder of European Jews by the Nazis.

The hospital bombing came less than 24 hours before the scheduled arrival of Biden in Israel “to stand in solidarity” with the Netanyahu government. Israel has rolled out the red carpet for Biden, dyed in the blood of 500 Palestinians murdered Tuesday. As Biden’s plane touches down, bodies will continue to be pulled from the rubble.

Biden is expressing his “outrage” by traveling to Israel to shake Netanyahu’s hand and congratulate him on the attack, which in all likelihood was carried out with a bomb and fighter jet provided by the United States. His administration is totally implicated in this atrocity.

Over the weekend, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that there were no “red lines” beyond which the United States would not support Israel. The Department of State has declared that it is impermissible for US officials to call for a ceasefire or de-escalation. The far-right Netanyahu regime has initiated a campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the population of Gaza. It has displaced hundreds of thousands of people from the country’s north, systematically bombed civilian infrastructure, and cut off food, water, electricity and medical care to the entire population. The goal of Israel’s government is to

displace the people of Gaza from their land and to turn those it does not kill into stateless, landless refugees.

The plan was spelled out by one Israeli official, who said that Gaza would be reduced to “a city of tents” and “razed to the ground.” This policy has the full support of the imperialist powers, who have given Israel, their client state in the Middle East, carte blanche to massacre and displace the Palestinians.

The language used by Israeli and US officials over the past week was aimed at creating the atmosphere in which this type of terror could be implemented. Both Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant called the Palestinians “animals.” On Tuesday, Netanyahu went further, calling the Palestinians the “children of darkness.” Last week, Biden echoed this language, calling the actions of Palestinians who broke out of their prison camp “pure evil.”

Longtime Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat often repeated the saying: “We are not the Red Indians,” referring to the systematic despoiling, massacre, and displacement of America’s Native American population. To this, the imperialist powers declare, “Yes, you are.”

The open embrace of genocide against the Palestinians comes as the United States is ever more directly involved in the war. On Tuesday, the Pentagon ordered 2,000 troops to be on alert for potential deployment to the Middle East. It also announced that the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, including 2,400 Marines, would be deployed to the region, alongside two US aircraft carriers. The US military is targeting not only the Palestinians, but also creating the conditions for war with Iran.

The conflict that is taking place can only be understood in the context of the eruption of global militarism by the United States targeting Russia and China. The US war with Russia in Ukraine is now spreading into a global conflagration and developing into a regional war in the Middle East.

The *Washington Post* reported that the Biden administration has called for turning a \$20 billion bill to arm Ukraine into a massive \$100 billion spending package for the wars in Ukraine, the Middle East and the Pacific.

All the lies used to justify the war in Ukraine are exploded by Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians. The US government has claimed that it is supporting “national sovereignty” against Russian aggression, that Russia was carrying out “war crimes,” even “genocide”—now all the imperialist powers are openly supporting what are in fact genocidal actions. Even if one were to accept all the lying propaganda of the American media in relation to

Russian actions in Ukraine, it pales in comparison to what Israel is now doing before the eyes of the whole world.

Millions of people have poured onto the streets to denounce what is happening in real time. The sentiment of the broad mass of the people, despite all the lies, propaganda and intimidation, is on the side of the Palestinians. These protests must be expanded to encompass ever broader layers of workers and youth. They should be connected to the developing strike wave of workers in the United States and internationally against exploitation.

On Monday, a group of Palestinian trade unions called on workers throughout the world to support their strike:

“As Israel escalates its military campaign, Palestinian trade unions call on our counterparts internationally and all people of conscience to end all forms of complicity with Israel’s war crimes, most urgently halting the arms trade with Israel, as well as all funding and military research.”

It continued:

“This urgent, genocidal situation can only be prevented by a massive increase in global solidarity with the people of Palestine and that can restrain the Israeli war machine. We need you to take immediate action, wherever you are in the world, to prevent the arming of the Israeli state.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* endorses the call by Palestinian trade unions. Beyond that, we call on workers throughout the world to take strike action to deprive Israel of all resources that can be utilized in its war. Dockworkers, airport and transport workers all over the world should refuse to handle any weapons directed toward Israel.

Workers must demand an immediate halt to the Israeli bombing of Gaza and the demobilization of all Israeli troops and their withdrawal from the border with Gaza. The siege on Gaza must be ended, and food, water, electricity, medical care and all other necessities must be made available immediately.

The International Criminal Court must initiate proceedings against Netanyahu, Scholz, Biden and all the leading figures in the US-NATO axis who are supporting the Israeli genocide against Gaza.

It is only through the intervention of masses of workers and youth throughout the world that this unfolding genocide can be stopped and those responsible be held to account.

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