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## ***G7 members threaten Iran with regional war amid ongoing Israeli slaughter in Gaza***



Israeli army troops are seen next to a destroyed building during a military operation in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 [AP Photo/Ohad Zwigenberg]

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reaffirmed his government's opposition to a ceasefire Wednesday, emboldened by a G7 statement that backed Israel's genocidal violence against the Palestinians in the name of "self-defence" and threatened Iran. The imminent danger of a region-wide war was underlined as both the US and Israel launched air strikes in Syria against targets claimed to be associated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corp.

Meeting in Tokyo, foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy and the US gave their stamp of approval to the Netanyahu regime's bombardment of Gaza,

which has officially claimed over 10,500 civilian lives. “We unequivocally condemn the terror attacks by Hamas and others across Israel that began on October 7, 2023, as well as ongoing missile attacks against Israel,” the statement declared, echoing the pro-war propaganda of the far-right Netanyahu regime. “We emphasize Israel’s right to defend itself and its people, in accordance with international law, as it seeks to prevent a recurrence.”

The G7 statement carried the unmistakable signature of US imperialism as it prepares for a wider regional war to secure its hegemony against all challenges. “We call on Iran to refrain from providing support for Hamas and taking further actions that destabilize the Middle East, including support for Lebanese Hezbollah and other non-state actors, and to use its influence with those groups to de-escalate regional tensions,” the statement threatened. In a section devoted entirely to “Iran,” it denounced everything from the country’s nuclear power program to development of ballistic missiles and human rights record.

Needless to say, no mention was made of the “destabilising” role of American imperialism, which has waged wars across the Middle East and Central Asia for the past three decades, destroying entire societies in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. In portraying Iran as the chief escalator of the present situation, the fact that Washington has dispatched two aircraft carrier battlegroups and a nuclear-armed submarine to the region was also passed over in silence.

The G7 statement also included sections asserting the bloc’s support for the ongoing US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and denouncing China as a threat to the stability of the “Indo-Pacific.” The statement underscores that the imperialist powers, led by the United States, view the expansion of war throughout the Middle East as one front in a global struggle for a redivision of the world.

Just hours after the provocative G7 statement, US aircraft struck a site in eastern Syria allegedly used by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps and allied groups. Describing the air strike as a “self defence” act following a series of attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria, a Pentagon statement said that President Biden “directed” the strike to “make clear that the United States will defend itself, its personnel, and its interests.”

Israeli air strikes were also launched against southern Syria and Lebanon, resulting in the deaths of three people.

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Within the context of their support for Israeli genocide and threats of war with Iran, the G7's appeal for "urgent action" to reduce the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza appears risible. The Orwellian call for "humanitarian pauses" in Israel's relentless onslaught will do nothing to stop the Netanyahu regime's collective punishment of the entire 2.3 million population by withholding fuel, electricity and clean drinking water.

In remarks at the White House on Wednesday, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby underscored just how flimsy such pauses would be, explaining that they would last "hours to days." He continued, "So it would be an agreement that for a set period of time in these agreed coordinates, there would be a pause in the fighting. That doesn't mean there won't be, or couldn't be, fighting outside that zone during that same period of time. So all of that has to get factored in, and I have no doubt that on the Israeli side, as they look at each proposal, they'll think about the potential impact on their military operations on the ground or in the air."

In other words, Kirby, who just a day earlier confirmed that Washington is still imposing no "red lines" on Israel, was effectively admitting that Israel would have a veto power over any "humanitarian pause" that clashes with its military operations.

The green light from the G7 for Israel to continue with its murderous assault on Gaza coincided with further evidence of the horrendous conditions facing the population. The Norwegian Refugee Council reported that over half of all housing units have either been damaged or destroyed. The 40,000 housing units made uninhabitable have left 200,000 Palestinians without homes, while damage to over 220,000 homes has impacted over a million people.

The crisis in medical care also continues to deepen. According to a Gaza Health Ministry spokesperson, thousands of people in critical condition "do not have access to treatment in

hospitals in Gaza.” Dozens are dying each day as a result of Israel’s refusal to let them leave for treatment in Egypt.

Conditions are especially bleak in Gaza City, where Israeli forces are operating on the ground as bombardments continue. While ordering civilians to leave, the Israeli military opened only one “humanitarian corridor” for civilians to flee south. At least 100,000 civilians remain trapped in Gaza City and its environs, according to Israeli military estimates Wednesday.

The Al-Quds hospital in Gaza City has suspended all surgeries due to a lack of fuel, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. In its three buildings, some 14,000 people are sheltering. All roads leading to the hospital are closed due to the bombardment. “Most of the buildings around the hospital have been almost completely destroyed. The bombings are getting closer and closer to the hospital, and we fear a direct hit to the hospital,” the Palestinian Red Crescent said in a statement.

The indiscriminate slaughter of civilians continued Wednesday unabated, with at least 19 people killed in the latest strike on the Jabaliya refugee camp and the updated figures indicating that more than half of the enclave’s housing units have either been damaged or destroyed. Further south, sustained air strikes were carried out in many areas where Israel is demanding civilians flee to. Khan Younis was hit repeatedly throughout the day.

The United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees reported Wednesday that 92 aid workers have died in air strikes since October 7. “This is the highest number of United Nations aid workers killed in a conflict in the history of the United Nations,” the agency noted.

Raids by Israeli soldiers and far-right settlers across the West Bank are also intensifying, prompting a senior UN official to declare conditions “increasingly dire.” Martin Griffiths, head of the UN Relief Agency, noted, “Since October 7: 158 Palestinians were killed, including 45 children. Over 2,400 were injured. At least 250 children and over 1,000 were displaced—including 424 children.”

The G7 statement made a show of criticising “extremist settler violence” in the West Bank. But much like the call for “humanitarian pauses,” such platitudes ring hollow given

the unconditional support extended to Netanyahu, whose political career since the 1990s has been closely bound up with the rise of Israel's far-right settler movement.

Illustrating the worthlessness of the G7's condemnation, Netanyahu convened a meeting of settler leaders Wednesday to strengthen his support for their expansionist seizure of Palestinian land, which has essentially turned the West Bank into a series of isolated bantustans surrounded by Israeli settlements and transportation routes. Netanyahu declared that there is "a small handful of extremists who do not represent the group sitting here." He added, "I told President Biden that the accusations against the settlement movement are baseless. There is a small extreme minority that does not come from the settlement movement."

In reality, settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has been pervasive since October 7, with 218 attacks, or seven per day, recorded. The UN's Human Rights Office reported 28 attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties, 157 causing damage to property and 33 resulting in both. Even prior to the bombardment of Gaza, an average of three attacks by settlers on Palestinians occurred every day this year. "In nearly half of all incidents, Israeli forces were either accompanying or actively supporting the attackers," the UN wrote.

Repression against Israel's Arab population, which accounts for some 20 percent of the country's inhabitants, is also being strengthened. Israel's Supreme Court upheld a ban on protests calling for an end to the war in Gaza in the Palestinian towns of Shakhnin and Umm al-Fahm. More than 2,200 Israeli Palestinians have been taken into administrative detention since 7 October, according to Amnesty International, which pointed to widespread torture and abuse in detention centres.

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