

# 'Horrendous events' in Gaza 'beggar belief': UN rights chief

## International Desk

The level of violence ravaging Gaza in recent days is unfathomable, the UN rights chief said Sunday, with attacks on schools harboring displaced people and a hospital turned into a "death zone".

"The horrendous events of the past 48 hours in Gaza beggar belief," United Nations High Com-

missioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement. He spoke as the World Health Organization scrambled to evacuate the last remaining patients and staff from the Shifa Hospital, with UN officials describing the Palestinian territory's largest health facility, raided last week by Israeli troops, as a "death zone".

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A grab from an AFP TV video shows an Israeli armored vehicle rolling past Palestinians fleeing Gaza City on foot on November 18, 2023.  
● BELAL AL SABBAGH/AFP



Palestinians carry an injured person as rescuers search the rubble of a building for survivors following Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on November 18, 2023.  
● MAHMUD HAMS/AFP

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## US discussed post-Netanyahu era with Mideast countries

### PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

The enduring conflict in Gaza has evolved into one of the most devastating and destructive chapters within the intricate Israeli-Palestinian struggle, marked by unprecedented loss of Palestinian lives, particularly those of women and children, at the hands of Israel. This has been carried out through a myriad of air strikes and ground incursions, amounting to thousands, on the besieged coastal enclave. The toll on human life in Gaza has been staggering, exceeding 12,000 deaths with the vast majority being civilians, and resulting in the displacement of hundreds of thousands. The humanitarian situation in Gaza has plummeted into

dire straits, with the population grappling with severe shortages of essential resources such as water, electricity, fuel, and medicine, alongside the looming threat of disease outbreaks. Israel's actions have extended to the deliberate targeting of critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, and media offices, in blatant disregard of international humanitarian law. In response, human rights organizations have levied accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity against Israel, underscoring the urgent need for an independent and unbiased investigation. Israel couches its actions in Gaza as defensive measures against Hamas, the Palestinian resistance group in control of the en-

clave. However, numerous observers have highlighted the disproportionate and indiscriminate nature of Israel's attacks that amplify the underlying factors contributing to the conflict, such as the illegal occupation, blockade, and settlement expansion in Palestinian territories. The role and motivations of the United States, as Israel's primary ally and sponsor, in the ongoing crisis have come under scrutiny. Meanwhile, a notable dichotomy has emerged: while publicly and practically supporting Israel in its campaign in Gaza, the US has also been engaged in private discussions in the region, seeking to draw a distinction between a "bad Israel" and a "good Israel". Sources, on the condition of anonymity, told



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Ankara, Turkey, on November 6, 2023.  
● AP

Iran Nuances that US officials have conveyed their disapproval of some Israeli actions in Gaza to regional counterparts, attributing the current conduct in the conflict to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The sources said that Biden administration officials have told a number of regional Arab officials and leaders that Netanyahu will be gone after the current war and that his political rivals will be more willing to negotiate and work with the Arab states. American officials have urged re-

gional states to plan for a post-Netanyahu Israel after the war. In light of these developments, it became evident that the US strives to maintain the process of normalization between some Arab countries and Israel, despite widespread condemnation of Israel's aggression and oppression of the Palestinian people. Washington seeks to present a potential post-Netanyahu Israeli cabinet as a partner for Arab nations, emphasizing the two-state solution as a viable path to resolve the conflict, despite the formi-

dable challenges created by decades of Israeli policies. However, the US's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fraught with inconsistency. While professing support for a solution, it continues to back Israel, the country that denies Palestinians their fundamental rights and self-determination. Additionally, the US decision to recognize Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital and relocate its embassy there, in contravention of international law and UN resolutions, further complicated the situation. The United States' involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly regarding the assaults on Gaza, has sparked intense debate. Critics contend that the US has not only provided diplomatic support for Israel but has also directly facilitated these attacks through military assistance, including offer-

ing guidance to the Israeli military and potentially participating in the conflict firsthand. As a result, the US's involvement has entrenched it as a party to the conflict, implicating it in the resultant violence and civilian casualties. Additionally, the US has been implicated in safeguarding Israel from international critique and potential legal ramifications. Detractors posit that Israel's conduct in Gaza amounts to "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity", asserting that the US, by insulating Israel from international scrutiny and condemnation, is facilitating these alleged atrocities. Furthermore, the US has drawn criticism regarding its role in obstructing initiatives to institute a cease-fire. If successful, such endeavors could have conceivably stemmed the cycle of violence and forestalled further civilian casualties. Critics, however, contend that the US's resistance to these initiatives has permitted the conflict to rage on unrestrained, culminating in an increased toll on human life and suffering.