

Int'l ire after US vetoes cease-fire Ever Game for War

PA: US complicit in Israeli crimes



International Desk

The United States vetoed a United Nations resolution Friday backed by almost all other Security Council members and dozens of other nations demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. Supporters called it a terrible day and warned of more civilian deaths and destruction as the war goes into its third month. The vote in the 15-member council was 13-1, with the United Kingdom abstaining. France and Japan were among those supporting the call for a cease-fire, according to AP. The United States' isolated stand reflected a growing fracture between Washington and some of its closest allies over Israel's monthslong bombardment of Gaza.

In a vain effort to press the Biden administration to drop its opposition to calling for a halt to the fighting, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey were all in Washington on Friday. But their meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken took place only after the UN vote. Along with the vote, the Arab diplomats' mission served to shift responsibility more squarely onto

the United States for protecting Israel from growing demands to stop the airstrikes that are killing thousands of Palestinian civilians.

US Deputy Ambassador Robert Wood called the resolution "imbalanced" and criticized the council after the vote for its failure to condemn Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel or to acknowledge Israel's right to defend itself. He declared that halting military action would allow Hamas to continue to rule Gaza and "only plant the seeds for the next war". Israel's military campaign has killed more than 17,700 people in Gaza — 70% of them women and children — and wounded more than 46,000, according to the Palestinian territory's Health Ministry, which says many others are trapped under rubble.

US draws int'l ire

Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas said the United States' veto made it complicit in what he described as war crimes against Palestinians, France 24 reported. The council called the emergency meeting to hear from Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who for the first time invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter, which enables a

UN chief to raise threats he sees to international peace and security. He warned of a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza and urged the council to demand a humanitarian cease-fire.

Guterres said he raised Article 99 — which hadn't been used at the UN since 1971 — because "there is a high risk of the total collapse of the humanitarian support system in Gaza." The UN anticipates this would result in "a complete breakdown of public order and increased pressure for mass displacement into Egypt," he warned.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian told UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a phone call that "As long as the US supports the crimes of the Zionist regime and the continuation of the war ... there is a possibility of an uncontrollable explosion in the situation of the region."

Iran's top diplomat also praised the UN chief's decision to use Article 99 of the UN Charter as "brave action to maintain international peace and security". Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, stressed in a statement, "The US government once again proved that it is the main culprit and guilty party in

the killing of civilians and Palestinian citizens, especially women and children, and destruction of vital infrastructure in Gaza," Press TV wrote.

Abushahab, the UAE diplomat, said before the vote that the resolution, which his country sponsored, had garnered nearly 100 co-sponsors in less than 24 hours, a reflection of global support for efforts to end the war and save Palestinian lives.

After the vote, he expressed deep disappointment at the US veto and warned that the Security Council is growing isolated and "appears untethered" from its mandate to ensure international peace and security.

Ambassador Nicolas De Rivièrre of France, a veto-wielding permanent council member who supported the resolution, lamented its lack of unity and pleaded "for a new, immediate, and lasting humanitarian truce that should lead to a sustainable cease-fire".

Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnès Callamard criticized the US for continuing to transfer munitions to the Israeli government "that contribute to the decimation of entire families." And Louis Charbonneau, UN director at Human

Rights Watch, said that by providing weapons and diplomatic cover to Israel "as it commits atrocities, including collectively punishing the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, the US risks complicity in war crimes."

Israel arrests, 'humiliates' civilians

Israel said Friday that the military was rounding up Palestinian men in northern Gaza for interrogation, searching for Hamas fighters.

The detentions pointed to Israeli efforts to secure the military's hold on northern Gaza as the war entered its third month. Furious urban fighting has continued in the north, underscoring Hamas' heavy resistance, and tens of thousands of residents are believed to remain in the area six weeks after troops and tanks rolled in.

Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim officials condemned Israel on Friday after images of detained Palestinian men stripped to their underwear in Gaza circulated on social media. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was concerned by the images and that all detainees must be treated with humanity and dignity in accordance with international humanitarian law.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (R) and Deputy Representative of the UAE Mohamed Abushahab stare at the UNSC meeting at the UN headquarters in New York City, US, on December 8, 2023.

● JUSTIN LANE/EFE

Some Palestinians said they recognized relatives in the images and denied they had links to Hamas or any other group. Some, they said, were boys or youths, Reuters reported. Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Al Safadi, speaking at a news conference in Washington, said doctors and journalists were among the men captured and "humiliated".

The London-based Arabic-language news outlet Al-Araby Al-Jadeed said one of the men detained was its correspondent, Diah Kahlout. It urged the international community and rights groups to denounce the arrest of journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists called for his release.

Meanwhile, Aryeh Yitzhak King, the deputy mayor of the occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem), called for burying alive those Palestinian civilians that were captured and paraded by Israeli forces during the occupying entity's war on the besieged Gaza Strip.

Iran: JCPOA becoming more useless day by day



● IRNA

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers is becoming more and more useless, day by day.

Addressing a group of students at the University of Tehran on the occasion of the national Student Day, the Iranian foreign minister said that Iran will not cross its redlines to revive the 2015 agreement on its nuclear programs.

Talks on the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have been on pause since August, 2022, with Iran blaming a lack of political will on the part of US President Joe Biden's administration to undo the damage caused to the multilateral nuclear deal by the previous US administration.

Former US president Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the UNSC-endorsed agreement in May 2018, imposing severe economic sanctions against Tehran while Iran was adhering to its commitments under the deal and even continued to do so for a year after the US withdrawal.

Tehran scaled back its commitments to the JCPOA in a series of pre-announced and clear steps after witnessing the other parties' failure to secure its interests under the agreement.

Amir-Abdollahian said that the other parties to the nuclear deal did not heed Iran's redlines. Iran is not currently on the path to sign a new agreement to revive the JCPOA. "We will not get caught in the narrow tunnel of the JCPOA," the Iranian top diplomat underscored.

"Of course, this does not mean that we have set the agreement aside. If the agreement serves our interests, [we will accept it] with all its flaws."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that American companies are among customers of Iran's heavy water.

As confirmed by US officials, Iran produces a very high quality heavy water in the world, Iran's top diplomat said. Back in 2016, the US agreed to buy 32 tons of Iran's heavy water, which is used in some nuclear reactors. US officials said the heavy water would be resold for research purposes.

Heavy water, formed with a hydrogen isotope, is not radioactive but has research and medical applications. Under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran was allowed to use heavy water in its modified Arak nuclear reactor, but must sell any excess supply of both heavy water and enriched uranium on the international market.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Germany asks Iran to help de-escalate region

International Desk

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called on Tehran to contribute to the alleviation of tensions in the Western Asia region, as the Gaza war has raised concerns over the expansion of the conflict.

In a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, the German diplomat underscored that the Gaza crisis can be settled only through political solutions.

Iranian FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, for his part, emphasized that a political solution for the crisis is a move by the United Nations to conduct a referendum in Palestine among the true civilians there, including the Jews, the Muslims, and the Christians.

Amir-Abdollahian urged the global society to pay special attention to the fact that civilians, children, and women continue to be killed in Gaza and the West Bank.



● FLASHPIC