

Biden Administration Reportedly Blocking UN Cease-Fire Statement as Israel Bombards Gaza

"The violence in Israel and Gaza must end," said U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman. "Congress and President Biden must act immediately. No one wins with war."

By [Jake Johnson](#)

Global Research, May 13, 2021

[Common Dreams](#) 12 May 2021

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [United Nations](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

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The Biden administration is reportedly blocking the release of a United Nations Security Council statement calling for an immediate cease-fire as Israel continues its devastating assault on the occupied Gaza Strip, killing dozens of Palestinians and injuring hundreds more.

[According to Reuters](#), which cited anonymous diplomats and sources familiar with the Biden administration's strategy, the United States is "delaying" the U.N. Security Council's "efforts to issue a public statement on escalating tensions between Israel and the Palestinians because it could be harmful to behind-the-scenes efforts to end the violence."

One source told the outlet that the U.S. is "actively engaged in diplomacy behind the scenes with all parties to achieve a cease-fire," but the official did not specify how a U.N. Security Council joint statement—which must be agreed to by consensus—would undermine those talks.

The Guardian [confirmed Reuters'](#) reporting, noting early Wednesday that the Biden administration "blocked a U.N. Security Council statement calling for a cease-fire" as horrifying footage of the situation on the ground in Gaza continues to emerge.

pic.twitter.com/rqm2v98nGH يا الهي.. انقص المصور

— أحمد العربي (@AShehade) [May 12, 2021](#)

During a [press briefing](#) on Tuesday, U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price repeatedly dodged when asked whether the Biden administration has dropped its opposition to the U.N. Security Council statement, which was [first put forth](#) by the Norwegian mission on Monday.

“The provocations that we have seen have resulted in a lamentable, deeply lamentable, loss of life—of Israeli life and of Palestinian life,” said Price, who a day earlier [refused to condemn](#) Israel’s killing of children in airstrikes on Gaza. “Our message continues to be one of de-escalation. We do not want to see any actor, be it a government or be it an intergovernmental body, take an action that could serve to escalate rather than de-escalate.”

The U.N. Security Council is set to [hold another emergency meeting](#) Wednesday to discuss the joint statement, a version of which reportedly calls on Israel to “cease settlement activities, demolitions, and evictions” in occupied East Jerusalem and elsewhere.

On Tuesday, a U.N. spokesperson [said](#) Secretary-General António Guterres is “gravely concerned by the serious escalations in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, including the latest escalation in Gaza, which add to the heightened tensions and violence in occupied East Jerusalem.”

“Israeli security forces must exercise maximum restraint and calibrate their use of force,” the spokesperson added. “The indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars towards Israeli population centers is unacceptable. This spiraling escalation must cease immediately.”

As the Biden administration stands in the way of the U.N. Security Council statement, Israel is [reportedly refusing to accept](#) a cease-fire offer proposed by the U.N. and Egypt as the Netanyahu regime ramps up its bombardment of Gaza, killing civilians—including children—and [destroying residential buildings](#) in what observers are calling blatant war crimes.

Citing an unnamed senior Israeli official, *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#) early Wednesday that “Israel will not negotiate a cease-fire before Hamas pays a price for its attacks.”

Hamas leaders, for their part, have said they are in contact with Egypt, Qatar, and other parties seeking to deescalate the deadly violence.

“We clarified that the one who started this campaign and aggression is Israel and not us,” Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas’ political bureau, said in a [speech](#) Tuesday. “They are the ones who murdered and hurt women and children, and Israel is responsible. We are ready for an escalation and ready for calm, on the condition that they end the aggression.”

As *Common Dreams* [reported](#) Tuesday, the Biden administration is facing growing pressure from members of Congress to take action to halt Israel’s latest attacks on Gaza, which have thus far killed more than 40 Palestinians and wounded 300—including at least 86 children.

“The United States must call for an immediate cease-fire and an end to provocative and illegal settlement activity,” Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) said in a statement Tuesday. “And we must also recommit to working with Israelis and Palestinians to finally end this conflict.”

Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.) echoed that message, [tweeting](#) late Tuesday that the Biden administration “must broker a cease-fire.”

“The violence in Israel and Gaza must end,” said Bowman. “The situation is escalating.

People are sheltered, afraid to go to schools or houses of worship. The stories are heartbreaking. Congress and President Biden must act immediately. No one wins with war.”

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