

Biden Phones Netanyahu: Doesn't Condemn Attack

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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update (4:10pm): According to the [White House readout](#) of Biden's Saturday call to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the US president "reaffirmed his strong support for Israel's right to defend itself against rocket attacks from Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza," while condemning the "indiscriminate attacks" coming from the Gaza Strip.

NEW: Biden spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and raised concerns about civilian casualties in Gaza and the bombing of the building that housed AP and other media offices. <https://t.co/Siva3uENZa>

— Axios (@axios) [May 15, 2021](#)

He merely "raised concerns" about the "safety and security of journalists" – and glaringly absent was any specific mention in the call readout of the intentional targeting of the media building which was hit by a reported six airstrikes earlier in the day, causing it to be flattened.

According to *Axios* in the call with Netanyahu Biden stopped short of an outright condemnation of the attack, [but merely](#) "raised concerns about civilian casualties in Gaza and the bombing of the building that housed AP and other media offices, according to Israeli officials."

The opening section from the White House statement on the call is [as follows](#):

The President spoke today with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. The President reaffirmed his strong support for Israel's right to defend itself against rocket attacks from Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza. He condemned these indiscriminate attacks against towns and cities across Israel. The President updated the Prime Minister on high-level U.S. engagement with regional partners on this issue and discussed ongoing diplomatic efforts. The President noted that this current period of conflict has tragically claimed the lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians, including children. He raised concerns about the safety and security of journalists and reinforced the need to ensure their protection.

Statement from [@AP](#) President and CEO Gary Pruitt on the Israeli attack against our bureau in Gaza:

"The world will know less about what is happening in Gaza because of what happened today." <https://t.co/CqoDxogAJ3>

— Samya Kullab | سامية كُلاب (@samya_kullab) [May 15, 2021](#)

Biden also phoned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian officials confirmed, which marks a first during his administration. *Axios* details the call as follows:

- "President Biden updated President Abbas on U.S. diplomatic engagement on the ongoing conflict and stressed the need for Hamas to cease firing rockets into Israel," a White House [readout](#) of the call said.
- The Palestinian Authority on Friday criticized the U.S. position on the Gaza crisis and called the Biden administration to intervene.

And further, Abbas's spokesperson, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, was quoted in a statement:

"The silence by the Biden administration about what Israel is doing and the claim it is self defense led to massacres in Gaza and the West Bank. We ask the U.S. to take action because it is the only party in the world who can stop Israeli aggression."

Meanwhile, more and more protests are popping up across Europe – and some in the United States – expressing solidarity with Palestinians. "Protesters gathered in London, Berlin, Madrid and Paris as the worst violence in years raged between Israel and militants in Gaza," AFP and others observed.

Thousands of protesters in London and Madrid marched in support of Palestinians on Saturday as the worst violence in years raged between Israel and militants in Gaza <https://t.co/syzUFfODAc>

— AFP News Agency (@AFP) [May 15, 2021](#)

The death toll continues to climb into the night Saturday, with regional media counting at least 145 deaths in Gaza from the airstrikes.

In Israel, at least eleven have been killed by the continuing onslaught of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket fire. Amid increased international condemnation for the appalling civilian death toll and especially high number of children killed and wounded, Netanyahu's office released a statement placing [blame squarely on Hamas for the casualties](#)...

After the reported death of a family of 10 in an Israeli strike in Gaza this morning, eight of them children, the prime minister's Arab-language spokesman blames Hamas, Channel 12 reports.

"Hamas bears full blame for the deaths of civilians in Gaza," he says in a statement. "It sought this escalation and started it when it attacked Jerusalem. It intentionally buried

its rocket launchers and weapons caches and posts in the center of residential areas and this is a war crime. It attacks our citizens to kill as many of them as possible and that is another war crime.”

Death toll from ongoing Israeli bombardment on besieged Gaza climbs to 145, including 41 children and 23 women, while US repeats support for Tel Aviv
<https://t.co/FETPmVuIQY>

— TRT World (@trtworld) [May 15, 2021](#)

In the US, many are taking increasing notice of the apparent complete lack of any US plan or diplomatic intervention toward a ceasefire.

Once again, Netanyahu's govt is slaughtering Palestinian Arabs in Gaza for political reasons to avoid a 5th election, and to impede his pending prosecution. Once again, Biden/Pelosi show no compassion to the mounting Palestinian civilian fatalities, using U.S. weapons and aid.-R

— Ralph Nader (@RalphNader) [May 14, 2021](#)

For now it seems the Biden White House is merely content to express “concerns” as the region burns.

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update (12:49pm): So far the Biden administration has stopped short of condemning the Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza offices of US-based *Associated Press* and other international media outlets, which flattened the 12-story Al-Jalaa tower, resulting in widespread outrage from journalists and media rights organizations across the globe.

Hours after the attack Joe Biden as reportedly phoned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to express Washington’s “concerns” and to convey the “paramount responsibility” to protect journalists.

[#BREAKING](#) Israel's Netanyahu, US president Biden speak after Israel flattens AP news office in Gaza: statement pic.twitter.com/ltqTbUH1Sh

— AFP News Agency (@AFP) [May 15, 2021](#)

This also as the death toll continues to soar amid unrelenting airstrikes – also as Hamas rockets continue to fly toward Israel – at over 140 Gazans killed since Monday.

Al Jazeera's office in Gaza destroyed by an Israeli airstrike. The building also housed residential apartments and the AP bureau. This is the 6th consecutive day Israel has been bombing Gaza. The Gaza death toll is at 140, including 39 children. pic.twitter.com/2rNm9eMlaG

— IMEU (@theIMEU) [May 15, 2021](#)

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update (12:30pm): The White House has said it communicated its “concerns” to Israel over the safety of journalists after IDF airstrikes obliterated the 12-story office building that housed international media headquarters in Gaza, most notably the AP and Al Jazeera...

“We have communicated directly to the Israelis that ensuring the safety and security of journalists and independent media is a paramount responsibility,” White House press secretary Psaki wrote.

We have communicated directly to the Israelis that ensuring the safety and security of journalists and independent media is a paramount responsibility.

— Jen Psaki (@PressSec) [May 15, 2021](#)

AP CEO Gary Pruitt previously said [in a statement](#): “We are shocked and horrified that the Israeli military would target and destroy the building housing AP’s bureau and other news organizations in Gaza. They have long known the location of our bureau and knew journalists were there. We received a warning that the building would be hit.”

*

Israel has targeted yet another large office and residential tower in the Gaza Strip, but this time its warplanes have destroyed the 12-story building housing the media offices of the U.S.-based *Associated Press* and Qatar-based broadcaster *Al Jazeera*, the AP itself as well as Reuters eyewitnesses confirm.

The outlets have said that Israel issued advanced warning of the airstrikes of up to one hour before the attack on Al-Jalaa tower. Representatives with the AP and the building owner had reportedly pleaded with IDF officials to give more time to enable a safe evacuation and also to take out crucial media equipment.

Oh my god. The building where al Jazeera’s office is housed has just been taken down by Israeli airstrikes. There was a warning and evacuated. It houses offices and private homes. I can’t believe it. pic.twitter.com/Q4luRYk9H9

— Stefanie Dekker (@StefanieDekker) [May 15, 2021](#)

However, eyewitnesses say they were not given extra time, but merely made it out with whatever they had in hand and with their own lives.

The building can be seen essentially collapsing in its own footprint, the same way that three prior residential apartment buildings did during days past. “The building was hit approximately six times before collapsing in plumes of black smoke, which engulfed the entire neighborhood,” international press reports [noted](#).

□ LIVE footage of the moment an Israeli air raid bombed the offices of Al Jazeera and The Associated Press in Gaza City ↓

□ LIVE updates: <https://t.co/RvtP1lEX1x> pic.twitter.com/RBO1ZiDAI0

— Al Jazeera English (@AJEnglish) [May 15, 2021](#)

The moment Israel bombed Al-Jalaa tower in Gaza housing international media outlets including Al Jazeera and AP. Reports and media personnel were not even allowed time to grab their equipment before evacuating the building [#GazaUnderAttack](#) [#Palestine](#) pic.twitter.com/jR2oMDyr68

— Marwa Fatafta #SaveSheikhJarrah (@marwasf) [May 15, 2021](#)

“The strike on the high-rise came nearly an hour after the military ordered people to evacuate the 12-story building, which also housed Al-Jazeera, other offices and residential apartments. The strike brought down the entire structure, which collapsed in a gigantic cloud of dust,” [AP writes](#).

“There was no immediate explanation for why it was attacked,” AP adds.

The IDF in a later follow-up statement alleged the media offices contained Hamas military intelligence units...

After providing advance warning to civilians & time to evacuate, IDF fighter jets struck a multi-story building containing Hamas military intelligence assets.

The building contained civilian media offices, which Hamas hides behind and deliberately uses as human shields. pic.twitter.com/zeDjEquePD

— Israel Defense Forces (@IDF) [May 15, 2021](#)

The devastating attack brought swift condemnation by various international media organizations and advocates, with a number of prominent journalists expressing their shock, [saying](#) they “can’t believe” the media building was so blatantly targeted by Israel’s military.

AP president Gary Pruitt issued a statement saying “we are shocked and horrified” at the “incredibly disturbing” attack wherein “we narrowly avoided a terrible loss of life.”

AP statement on Israeli attack on building housing AP office

AP President and CEO Gary Pruitt has released the following statement:

We are shocked and horrified that the Israeli military would target and destroy the building housing AP's bureau and other news organizations in Gaza. They have long known the location of our bureau and knew journalists were there. We received a warning that the building would be hit.

We are seeking information from the Israeli government and are engaged with the U.S. State Department to try to learn more.

This is an incredibly disturbing development. We narrowly avoided a terrible loss of life. A dozen AP journalists and freelancers were inside the building and thankfully we were able to evacuate them in time.

The world will know less about what is happening in Gaza because of what happened today.

WATCH: The owner of al-Jalaa tower pleads with an Israeli officer on live TV to let journalists collect their gear before he bombs it.

Moments later, Israeli air strikes demolish the [#Gaza](#) building that housed several international media offices used by Aljazeera and MEE pic.twitter.com/a5PRzQNOKC

— Middle East Eye (@MiddleEastEye) [May 15, 2021](#)

"Journalists who worked there had been reporting on the Israeli attacks on Gaza," *Al Jazeera* said in a social media statement. "Targeting journalists is a war crime."

An Israeli airstrike destroyed the Al Jazeera office in Gaza. The Israeli military warned they would hit the building that houses media organizations including the AP.

Journalists who worked there had been reporting on the Israeli attacks on Gaza. pic.twitter.com/fZVo3TFEoO

— AJ+ (@ajplus) [May 15, 2021](#)

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