

## [Biden's Failure on Gaza Could Cost Him the Election](#)

**By refusing to call for a ceasefire as civilian deaths rise, Biden is alienating young and left-leaning voters.**

The staggering civilian death toll from Israel's bombardment of civilian population centers has, at the time of this writing, [more than quadrupled](#) the civilian death toll from the horrendous Hamas [terrorist attacks](#) in early October. Unlike the massacres committed by Hamas fighters, however, the Biden Administration and Congressional leaders of both parties are [actively supporting](#) the ongoing carnage Israel is unleashing on the residents in Gaza, [opposing](#) international calls for a ceasefire, and pledging more military aid to Israel to better enable the rightwing government's relentless assault on that crowded urban enclave.

This could have serious political repercussions at home.

In response to popular outrage over widespread Israeli war crimes documented by [Amnesty International](#) and other [human rights observers](#), the [Biden Administration](#) keeps insisting that the United States supports Israel's "right to self-defense." But hardly anyone is questioning Israel's right to self-defense. What people are questioning, however, is the bombing of civilian targets.

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman [Daniel Hagari](#) has acknowledged that, as Israel continues to drop many hundreds of tons of bombs on the tiny strip of land that is Gaza, "the emphasis is on damage and not on accuracy".

It would appear that Biden believes that massive indiscriminate attacks on crowded urban neighborhoods by Israel is somehow legitimate self-defense. The contrast between the [outrage of the Biden Administration](#) towards Russia for their attacks on civilian population centers in Ukraine with their support for Israel is striking.

When the international community came together last week to address the escalating violence, it became clear that the United States would veto any call for a ceasefire. On October 18, Brazil put forward a resolution which, in addition to condemning Hamas terror, simply called for "pauses" in the fighting to allow for humanitarian aid to go to Gaza, where Israel has [cut off](#) all water, food, medical supplies, power, and fuel. The United States vetoed it anyway, casting the only negative vote in that fifteen-member body. The United States has also unsuccessfully tried to push [through a resolution](#) that condemns Hamas and supports Israel's military response, but does not call for a ceasefire.

While [rightwing evangelicals](#) are supporting the going war, the [Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church](#), and most [major Protestant denominations](#) have gone on record calling for a ceasefire. Major American peace and human rights organizations [have endorsed](#) a ceasefire as well. Polls show nearly two-thirds of Americans, including [80 percent](#) of Democrats, believe the Biden Administration should support de-escalation and a ceasefire.



Biden has, of course, rejected that. Indeed, the State Department is actively discouraging diplomats working on Middle East issues from saying the U.S. wants to see less violence. A [leaked memo](#) in mid-October forbade U.S. diplomats working on Middle East issues from using the phrases “de-escalation/ceasefire,” “end to violence/bloodshed,” and “restoring calm.” As a result, there has been [growing dissent](#) among career State Department officials over the Biden Administration’s policies, leading to several [resignations](#).

A bill in the U.S. House Representatives was [introduced](#) by Representative Cori Bush, Democrat of Missouri, calling for a ceasefire, yet so far it has received [less than two dozen](#) endorsers in the 435-member legislative body and rejections by the [majority](#) of Congressional Democrats who [continue to support](#) the ongoing Israeli assault. The overwhelming majority of Congressional Democrats, therefore, are siding with the rightwing Christian fundamentalists against the mainline churches and with Netanyahu against peace and human rights organizations.

On October 25, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [a resolution](#) by a 412-10 margin condemning Hamas’s attacks on civilians in Israel with no call for a ceasefire and no mention of the far greater number of civilians killed by Israeli air strikes, instead defending what it called Israel’s “right to self-defense.”

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This ongoing failure of even some of the more progressive Democrats to support a ceasefire has led to a rebellion among their staff members. The political director for Representative Ro Khanna, Democrat of California, [has resigned](#) over his refusal to support the resolution calling for a ceasefire. Hundreds of staffers on Capitol Hill [have signed](#) an open letter imploring their bosses to “join calls for an immediate cease-fire,” noting how “millions of lives hang in the balance.”

Meanwhile, White House press secretary [Karine Jean-Pierre](#) has referred to calls by progressive members of Congress for a ceasefire and who have condemned Israeli policies along with condemning Hamas terrorism as “repugnant” and “disgraceful.”

Polls also show a majority of Americans [do not support](#) sending additional military aid to Israel, but Biden is [calling for](#) an additional \$10 billion in military aid to enable them to continue their war on Gaza. There appears to be little opposition in Congress.

All this is leading to serious questions regarding the level of democracy in this country where the executive branch and a large majority of the legislative branch are pursuing policies so counter to the will of the majority of the nation’s citizens on what has become in recent weeks the biggest political issue in the news.

[Regarding public opinion](#), there is a huge divide by age. While older voters tend to see Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state as a manifestation of a national liberation movement by a historically-oppressed people, younger voters see it more as a settler-colonial enterprise that assumes supremacy of a particular religious/ethnic group over an Indigenous population. While Zionism certainly contains both of these elements, younger voters—who are more ethnically diverse and more cognizant of issues of racial justice and Indigenous rights—tend to be far more sympathetic to the Palestinians than their elders.

Younger voters are as horrified at Hamas terror attacks as anyone, but they are also horrified at Israeli terror bombing and the crippling siege of Gaza and U.S. support for it. According to a [recent poll](#), while a sizable majority of voters over age fifty “fully support” Israel’s war on Gaza, barely one-quarter of voters under thirty-five support it.

The Biden Administration has ended up with some [striking parallels](#) to that of Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s—a surprisingly progressive domestic policy combined with a foreign policy of supporting brutal dictatorships, excessive military spending, and the terror bombing of civilians. Yet, unlike Johnson in 1968, there are no serious primary challengers with an antiwar and pro-human rights agenda representing the majority of Democrats.

When there are two political parties whose leadership insists on unconditional support for and military aid to a far-right government that is bombing crowded residential neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, and fleeing refugees, there are going to be a lot of people who are going to refuse to vote for either of them. Many of those who may vote for Democrats are less likely to campaign for, or contribute money to, pro-war Democrats or Democratic campaign committees.

A Gallup poll [released](#) on October 26 shows that Biden's approval rating has dropped 4 percent overall and 11 percent among Democrats since the start of the Israel-Hamas war to a record low of 37 percent.

Youth turnout and voter enthusiasm [has been critical](#) to Democratic victories in recent years. Elections where young people vote in lesser numbers or vote for a third party in higher numbers can result in Democratic defeats. In both the [1968](#) and 2004 elections, Democrats narrowly lost elections they otherwise would have won because their nominee supported a war large numbers of Democratic-leaning voters saw as illegal and immoral . Will this be Biden's fate in 2024?

The ramifications for Biden's support for Israel's war on Gaza, then, could have impacts far beyond Israel and Palestine.