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The US should take a hard look at the Netanyahu government's brutality before giving it more weapons

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The Biden Administration should do more than urge Israel's leaders to minimize civilian casualties. At the very least, it should veto any further military funding from Congress unless the bills include specific, enforceable safeguards to prevent excessive violence and unnecessary loss of life. Better yet, the US should redirect military aid for Israel toward humanitarian aid for all people dislocated or injured in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel in the current conflict.

A growing number of Americans are angry at the US government, Congress, and [pro-Zionist lobbyists](#) for giving the extremist Israeli government billions in military aid to slaughter thousands of civilians in Gaza with their tax dollars. Americans inured to decades of [information flow](#) from an Israeli-Jewish perspective are now absorbing news from a [variety of sources](#), including those sympathetic to the humanity of the indigenous Palestinian population. Americans are watching carnage and displacement of millions of people on TV and the internet. More are questioning why Israel is taking ever more [Palestinian land](#).

More Americans are rightly asking if Israel could [neutralize Hamas](#) without massive destruction and loss of civilian life. Indiscriminate air attacks by the Netanyahu regime already have killed and injured tens of thousands of Gazans with [no end](#) to the violence in sight. To put this in perspective, imagine how Washington, D.C., would look if a foreign government with the power to fence in the District of Columbia dropped a comparable number of bombs here while shutting off access to water and food and destroying most of the capital area's housing and medical system. UN officials say conditions in Gaza are [catastrophic](#).

Majority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#), Minority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), and others in the Senate are about to push through [billions of dollars](#) more for arms for a Netanyahu government whose cabinet members openly advocate ethnic cleansing

of the West Bank and Gaza. As one of many examples, in June, before the current conflict, [Israel National Security Minister](#) Itamar Ben-Gvir [said this to Israeli settlers](#) encroaching on West Bank land: "I give you my full and complete backing, but I want much more from the settlement here, there needs to be a full settlement here, not only here, but in all the hills around us.

"The Land of Israel must be settled and at the same time as the settlement of the Land a military operation must be launched. [We must] demolish buildings, eliminate terrorists, not one or two, but tens and hundreds, and if necessary even thousands, because at the end of the day, this is the only way we will hold on here, strengthen control and restore security to the residents, and above all we will fulfill our great mission. The Land of Israel is for the people of Israel, we are backing you, run to the hills, settle down. We love you." (Here's another account of the speech: [Israel's Ben-Gvir calls for assassination of 'thousands' of Palestinians - TRT World.](#))

A Nov. 30 Washington Post [article](#) detailing suppression of concerns by international aid agencies about "mass forced displacement" and human rights violations quotes two other senior Israeli leaders making similar comments advocating for ethnic cleansing: "Simcha Rothman, a prominent member of the Israeli parliament, [suggested](#) earlier this week that Gazans should be resettled in other parts of the world, alleging they were being held in Gaza by the United Nations 'for political reasons in order to hurt the state of Israel.'

"Earlier this month Israeli agriculture minister Avi Dichter [said](#): 'We're rolling out Nakba 2023,' using the Palestinian term, Arabic for 'catastrophe,' for the [mass expulsion](#) of Palestinians during the months before and after the 1948 war that created Israel."

If those statements weren't revealing enough, Bezalel Smotrich, now Israel's minister of finance, two years ago said during a [heated exchange](#) in the Knesset that the presence of Palestinians in Israel is a "mistake" and that Palestinians exist in Israel because its founder David Ben Gurion did not "finish the job" of [clearing out the territory](#) of its indigenous populations.

While Sen. Schumer and others play the "anti-Semitism" card - which resonates deeply with many of their supporters - more Americans, and much of the [world](#), instead see blatant hypocrisy as [right-wing](#) Israeli leaders pursue policies that

increasingly echo the German push for "[lebensraum](#)" during World II. From the history of its own people, shouldn't Israel's government know what it is like to be displaced, ridiculed, and killed because of one's ethnic status or religion? Israel's assault on the civilian population of Gaza echoes [pogroms](#) in Eastern Europe in which soldiers indiscriminately killed tens of thousands of Jews. For the record, the definition of the word '[Semite](#)' includes Palestinians and other groups along with Jews.

A growing number of Americans do not want to be associated with the brutal regime running Israel today and do not want our tax dollars spent on mass killing. Instead, Congress should funnel money into humanitarian aid while helping to develop a peaceful settlement. There also are plenty of better ways to use public funds to help struggling families at home.