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USA

# **Biden Under Pressure to Stop Israel's Genocide in Palestine; His Election Could Be at Stake**

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**The administration of President Joe Biden is under continuing and increasing pressure from those who sympathize with the Palestinians and call for a ceasefire and often too for an end to U.S. military aid to Israel. His reelection could be at stake in crucial swing states such as Michigan with large Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim populations.**

Americans, like millions more around the globe, are appalled by the continuing destruction that has nearly obliterated Gaza and killed thousands. The death toll is now estimated at over 28,000, though perhaps as many as another 6,000 may be buried under the rubble; 67,600 Palestinians have been injured, many maimed; most have been displaced with 1.9 million now living in 154 shelters, usually tent cities run by United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees.

The American reaction to Israel's continuing crimes against humanity and to the United States' continuing to support Israel militarily and politically has been enormous. There have been repeated rallies and marches for both Israel and Palestine involving two million people since October 7, 2023, but the pro-Palestinian demonstrations have been twice as large as those for Israel. Harvard's Nonviolent Action Lab and the Counting Crowds Consortium reports that 293,000 individuals participated in the pro-Israel events, and at least 694,000 in the pro-Palestinian events. The pro-Palestine rallies and marches are the biggest progressive movement since Black Lives Matter racial justice protests of 2020, which were the largest in U.S. history.

Some 70 U.S. cities and towns, among them Chicago and Seattle, have passed some sort of resolution on the Israel war on Gaza. Most of these symbolic statements have been passed in states and cities governed by Democrats. Some are stronger than others, but most of them call for a ceasefire, even though President Biden opposes such a measure.

Under this pressure, on February 8, Biden said that Israel's response to the Hamas attack was "over the top." But then White House aides said that that should not be interpreted as a change of position and that Biden continued to support Israel's war of self-defense, but believed Israel must take measures to protect civilians.

Biden's position is costing him the support of Arab American voters. According to the Arab American Institute, in 2020, a majority of Arab Americans, some 59%, supported Biden, while today only 17% or less do. Since 1997 a majority of Arab Americans identified as Democrats, but today 32% now identify as Republicans and 31% as independents. In Michigan, there are more than 200,000 registered voters who are Muslim and 300,000 people of Middle Eastern and North African ancestry, according to a report of voting patterns in 2020. And Biden won Michigan by just 154,000 votes, so clearly his reelection hangs in the balance.

Recognizing this, Biden sent a group of aides to Michigan on February 8, among them Samantha Power, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, principal deputy national security adviser Jon Finer and Steven Benjamin, who directs the Office of Public Engagement. Among others, they met with Arab American and Muslim state legislators Alabas Farhat and Abraham Aiyash, Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammound, Deputy Wayne County Executive Assad I. Turfe and Arab American News publisher Osama Siblani. Over 30 legislators have joined the "Listen to Michigan" campaign, promising to vote "uncommitted" rather than Republican or Democrat in the February 27 state primary election. The campaign is recruiting others.

Groups like the Palestinian Campaign for Human Rights call upon voters to "Resign from Bad Bosses Like Butcher Biden!" and demonstrators chant, "Genocide Joe, what do you say? How many kids have you killed today?"

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While Biden and his aides have focused on trying to keep their Arab and Muslim supporters, many Black people and many young people and some progressive Jews also sympathize with the Palestinian cause. Virtually every day, thousands are demonstrating somewhere in the country. Biden and the Democrats can see their Arab and Muslim voters, many waving Palestinian flags, marching away from them.

*11 February 2024*

*PS:*

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