

As Israel begins ‘final phase’ of genocide, Biden slams pro-Palestine protests

written by Sharon Zhang
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May 7 — As Israel embarked on the first steps of its long-promised invasion of Rafah, Biden delivered a chilling speech scapegoating Hamas militants and pro-Palestine protesters for antisemitism in the U.S. on Tuesday, vowing a crackdown on demonstrators seeking to end Israel's atrocities in Gaza.

During [remarks](#) at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Annual Days of Remembrance ceremony, Biden interweaved discussion of the Holocaust with condemnation of Hamas militants' attack on Israelis on October 7, 2023. Invoking racist tropes, Biden claimed that Hamas militants harbor the same "ancient hatred" of Jewish people that spurred the Holocaust — an equivalence that has been drawn by Israeli officials time and time again to justify Israel's brutality against Palestinians.

Antisemitic "hatred was brought to life on October 7 of 2023," Biden said, by Hamas militants "driven by an ancient desire to wipe out the Jewish people off the face of the earth." At one point, he equated the attack on October 7 to the Holocaust. "Too many people denying, downplaying, rationalizing, ignoring the horrors of the Holocaust on October 7, including Hamas's appalling use of sexual violence to torture and terrorize Jews."

This statement is incorrect and dangerous for many reasons, as human rights advocates have pointed out. As a group, Hamas is far from "ancient" — Hamas [was established](#) 37 years ago [by revolutionaries](#) seeking to liberate Palestine from decades of violent Israeli occupation, ethnic cleansing [and apartheid](#), with [an opposition to](#) Zionism, not the Jewish people, as the group established in their 2017 charter.

Saying that there is an "ancient desire" to kill Jewish people within the Palestinian resistance, then, implies that [Biden believes](#) that Palestinians have an innate desire to oppose Jewish people — an implication that many advocates for Palestinian rights have pointed out is deeply racist, and an accusation that has [long been](#)

[levied](#) against Palestinians in order to justify their slaughter.

“ Hamas was founded in 1987. So when the president says ‘ancient desires’ to eliminate the Jews, he’s making a point about Arabs/Muslims as inherently and viscerally genocidal,” said *AJ+*’s Sana Saeed [on social media](#).

The president spent roughly half of his speech, supposedly aimed at addressing antisemitism, denouncing Hamas and student protesters against genocide, without a word about the antisemitism growing within the Republican Party and embraced by his opponent in the presidential election. This is only the latest example of Biden and Zionists within his administration cynically using antisemitism as a bludgeon to silence critics of Israel’s genocide — a practice that many [Jewish anti-Zionists have said only](#) makes it harder to fight actual antisemitism.

Biden is one of the only people in the world [with the singular power to end](#) Israel’s genocide, which has killed [at least 34,000 Palestinians](#) so far, including over 14,500 children, with [full U.S. backing](#).

But rather than stop Israel as it [began its raid of Rafah](#) on Monday and Tuesday — something Biden said was [a “red line” that Israel cannot](#) cross just two months ago and that advocates have warned [is the “final phase”](#) of the genocide — Biden focused on vilifying the wave of pro-Palestine student protesters opposing Israel’s genocide. For the second time in days, [he smeared the protesters as antisemitic](#) without evidence, and vowed to crack down on them.

“We’ve seen a ferocious surge of antisemitism in America and around the world,” Biden said before going on to reference the protests. After implying that campus protests and pro-Palestine advocates were a danger to Jewish people in the U.S., he said that his administration is “mobilizing the full force of the federal government to protect Jewish communities.”

Jewish advocates for Palestinian rights reacted with horror to Biden's speech.

"It is a horrific lie that Jewish safety is protected by the Israeli government's slaughter of Palestinian families or that riot police arresting peaceful protestors is for the sake of Jewish students," said Stefanie Fox, Jewish Voice for Peace's executive director, in a statement. "Biden's speech used accusations of antisemitism to distract the American public from our complicity in the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. It was a grotesque betrayal of the memories of our families murdered in the Holocaust."

These remarks play into the tradition of Zionists [weaponizing antisemitism](#) in order to fuel repression of pro-Palestine advocates, levying accusations of antisemitism against advocates when [many Jewish advocates and Jewish organizations](#) have said that they have seen no evidence of widespread antisemitism among protesters. Rather, Zionists are seeking to obfuscate the history of Palestinian resistance and Israeli occupation by saying that any criticism of Israel is antisemitic; ironically, Zionist Republicans have invoked [detestable antisemitic tropes themselves in order to smear](#) protesters as the real antisemites.

Members of Congress recently sought to codify this into law with a bill that would explicitly adopt a definition of antisemitism that includes criticism of Israel. But this conflation actually risks worsening antisemitism and weakening the movement against it, as San Diego State University political science professor Jonathan Graubart recently wrote for *Truthout*.

"Shamelessly ... the [Anti-Defamation League] and other mainstream Jewish organizations add fuel to antisemitism by subordinating the struggle against antisemitism to advocacy on behalf of the state of Israel," Graubart wrote. "Rather than educate the public about the dangers of conflating Israel's actions with Jews at large, these organizations do the opposite by framing virtually all criticisms of Israel as antisemitic."

Source: Truthout

