

Poll: Biden Voters Passed on Harris Because of Gaza

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Nearly a third of U.S. voters who cast their ballots for former president Joe Biden in 2020 decided against voting for Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential elections because Biden supported Israel's war on Gaza, a new poll has shown.

The poll, conducted by the Institute of Middle East Understanding and YouGov, attempts to provide a possible answer to the question of why Harris received six million fewer votes than Biden received in 2020.

The survey, which was released last week, found that 29 percent of Americans who voted for Biden in 2020 and didn't vote for Harris in 2024 cited "ending Israel's violence in Gaza" as their reason for withholding their vote.

"Vice President Harris lost votes because of the Biden administration's support for Israel's genocide of Palestinians in



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators gather outside of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, on Aug. 11.

Gaza," IMEU said in a statement announcing the poll.

That reason surpassed the economy, immigration, health-care, and abortion, all of which have historically been major voter issues in past presidential elections. Foreign policy is often a low factor in voter turnout.

Harris became the Democratic nominee last July after Biden dropped out of the race following a dismal performance in

the first debate against Donald Trump.

While many Democratic voters were hopeful that Harris would break from Biden's unconditional and unrelenting support for the Zionist regime's war on Gaza, Harris made no effort to create any distance between her and her predecessor on the issue.

At the Democratic National Convention in August 2024, when Harris was to be officially

nominated as the Democratic nominee for president, the DNC was met with major pro-Palestinian protests outside the convention hall.

Inside the convention, DNC delegates aligned with the Uncommitted Movement called on convention leaders to allow a Palestinian speaker to speak on the main stage. The request was unequivocally denied.

While Harris offered a softer tone and evoked empathy with the Palestinians killed and under constant Israeli bombardment, she and those around her continuously reiterated support for the Zionist regime's genocidal campaign.

The IMEU and YouGov poll surveyed 604 voters between 20 December 2024 and 7 January 2025.

In the 2024 presidential election, Harris received 75 million votes compared to Trump's 77 million votes.

Israel's...

(Continued From Page One)

and be implemented in three stages.

Hamas released three Israeli women in exchange for 90 Palestinian prisoners, mostly women and children.

There was an element of theater in the handover, when dozens of masked Hamas fighters wearing green headbands and military fatigues paraded in front of cameras and held back a crowd of hundreds who surrounded the vehicles.

For all the military might Israel deployed in Gaza, it failed to remove Hamas from power, one of its central war aims. That could make a return to fighting more likely, but the results might be the same.

The resistance group has not only survived 15 months of war with Israel — among the deadliest and most destructive in recent memory — but it remains firmly in control of the coastal territory that now resembles an apocalyptic wasteland.

With a surge of humanitarian aid promised as part of the ceasefire deal, the Hamas-run government said Monday that it will coordinate distribution to the desperate people of Gaza.

The scenes elsewhere in Gaza were even more remarkable: Thousands of Hamas-run police in uniform re-emerged, making their presence known even in the most heavily destroyed areas.

"The police have been here the whole time, but they were not wearing their uniforms" to avoid being targeted by Israel, said Muhammad Abed, a father of three who returned to his home in Gaza City more than seven months after fleeing the area.

"They were among the displaced people in the tents. That's why there were no thefts," he said.

Other residents said the police had maintained offices in hospitals and other locations throughout the war, where people could report crimes.

Earlier this month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a prepared speech that Hamas had recruited nearly as many fighters as it lost during the war.

Michael Milshtein, an Israeli expert on Palestinian affairs and former military intelligence officer, said Hamas has returned to its insurgent roots, using creative tactics like harvesting unexploded Israeli ordnance for homemade bombs.

"The war is ending with a strong perception of success for Hamas," he added.

Avi Issacharoff, a veteran Israeli journalist — and co-creator of the Netflix hit "Fauda" — said Netanyahu's refusal to plan for the day after was the "biggest debacle of this war."

"Israel is waking up from a nightmare into the very same nightmare," he wrote in Yedioth Ahronot newspaper. "Hamas is going to remain in power and will continue to build more tunnels and recruit more men."

Fire...

(Continued From Page One)

NTV television suggested that the wooden cladding on the exterior of the hotel, in a chalet-style design, may have accelerated the spread of the fire.

Part of the 161-room hotel is on the side of a cliff, hampering efforts to combat the flames.

"Because the rear side is on a slope, intervention could only be made from the front and sides," Yerlikaya confirmed.

Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy told reporters that the hotel underwent inspections in 2021 and 2024 and that "no negative situation regarding fire competence" was reported by the fire department.

Earlier, in an address in Ankara, Erdogan said: "Unfortunately, we received very sad news this morning from Bolu, Kartalkaya. Our brothers and sisters were killed and injured in a fire that broke out in a hotel."

"All necessary steps will be taken to shed light on all aspects of the incident and to hold those responsible accountable," he added.

NTV showed a smoke-blackened lobby, its glass entrance and windows smashed, its wooden reception desk charred and a chandelier crashed to the ground.

Aydin's office said 30 fire trucks and 28 ambulances were sent to the site.

Other hotels at the resort were evacuated as a precaution and guests were placed in hotels around Bolu.

Meanwhile, a gas explosion at a hotel at another ski resort in central Turkey injured four people.

The explosion took place at the Yildiz Mountain Winter Sports Center in Sivas province. Two skiers and their instructor were slightly injured while another instructor received second-degree burns to the hands and face, the Sivas governor's office said.

Pezeshkian ...

(Continued From Page One)

Mustafayev conveyed warm greetings of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and conveyed his invitation to Pezeshkian to visit Baku. Over the past decades, he said, Azerbaijan has spared no effort to expand relations with Iran. "The important changes that we have witnessed during this short period of your presidency promise a bright future in the relations between the two countries and the situation in our region," he said. "We also appreciate the influential role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in establishing peace and stability in the region and believe that solving the problems of our region will be possible only by the countries of this region. The presence of foreign countries will not help us in this regard," he added.

He said the economic delegation accompanying him seeks to draw a roadmap for further expansion of economic and trade relations with Iran. "We want to establish strategic cooperation between the two countries," he added.

Envoy...

(Continued From Page 2)

depriving them of food, water, medicine, and electricity. These actions are collective punishment on an unimaginable scale," Irvani stated.

Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the UN emphasized that Israel's heinous crimes in Gaza, including mass killings of civilians, the destruction of vital infrastructure and the forced displacement of entire communities, constitute acts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

"Such crimes cannot be overlooked after the ceasefire; accountability and prosecution must be pursued."

Irvani continued that "an uncompromising accountability is crucial for justice and preventing further atrocities," saying, it is imperative that the Security Council should remain "objective and does not succumb to the propaganda of the terrorist regime of Israel that seeks to deflect attention from these underlying issues."

Iran's UN ambassador also stressed that the Zionist regime must honor its commitment to the ceasefire with Lebanon, immediately halt its violations of Lebanese sovereignty, and withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon after 60 days of the ceasefire agreement.

"The Security Council must adopt a firm position to ensure the full and precise implementation of the ceasefire agreement. Likewise, Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights violates the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement and UN Resolution 497, which declared its annexation illegal."

Irvani finally described resistance movements across the West Asia region as a legitimate response to decades of Israeli occupation, aggression and expansionist policies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its steadfast support of the Palestinian right to self-defense and resistance under international law, he concluded.

Israel was forced to agree to a ceasefire agreement on Wednesday after 15 months of bloody war on the Gaza Strip. The long-awaited Gaza ceasefire agreement went into effect on Sunday.

The ceasefire deal consists of three phases, each lasting 42 days. Negotiations for the second and third phases will begin on the 16th day of the implementation of the deal.

Lebanon President Demands Israel Commitment to Full Withdrawal

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on Tuesday reaffirmed Lebanon's adherence to "the completion of Israel's withdrawal from the remaining occupied territories in the south within the 60-day deadline stipulated in the agreement reached on Nov. 27, 2024, which expires in four days."

Aoun told Spanish Defense Minister Margarita Robles, during their meeting at the Presidential Palace, that "Israel's failure to commit to the with-

drawal contradicts the promises made to Lebanon during the negotiations preceding the agreement."

This, he said, "perpetuates tension in the border villages, prevents establishing stability, delays the return of residents to their towns, and obstructs the reconstruction of what the Israeli enemy destroyed during its aggression against Lebanon."

Aoun said he had sent several messages to force the Zionist regime to withdraw, receiving

support from the international community, "which is expected to exert pressure in this regard."

The president praised the role of "the Spanish battalion operating within the UNIFIL in southern Lebanon and the exceptional efforts of UNIFIL commander Maj. Gen. Aroldo Lazaro, as well as the complete coordination with army units deployed in the international operations area."

The Spanish minister underlined her country's "support for

the role Aoun is playing in Lebanon's recovery after the difficult circumstances it has faced."

She said: "Spain will stand by Lebanon and its people and will continue its work within the international forces," emphasizing "the necessity of achieving the Israeli withdrawal on time to preserve stability in the south and the progress made so far."

Robles also highlighted "Spain's collaboration with the EU to assist Lebanon in all fields."

Israel's War Spending in 2024 Lifts Debt Burden to 69% of GDP

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime spent about 100 billion shekels (\$28 billion) on military conflicts in 2024, the finance ministry said on Tuesday, a figure that has sharply pushed up regime borrowing and its debt burden.

The ratio of public debt to gross domestic product rose to 69.0% at the end of last year, from 61.3% in 2023.

The ratio has risen 9 percentage points over the past two years, largely due to the Zionist regime's onslaught against Pales-

tinians in Gaza and in Lebanon. Ceasefire deals have been made in recent weeks to end the fighting.

Entering the Gaza war in 2023, the occupying regime's low debt-to-GDP ratio provided flexibility, allowing funding to support displaced populations, businesses and reservists, finance minister Bezalel Smotrich said.

"The debt-to-GDP ratio in 2024 reflects the significant response to war needs, both on the security and civilian fronts," Accountant

General Yali Rothenberg said.

Total debt rose to 1.33 trillion shekels last year from 1.13 trillion in 2023. The regime's spending in 2024 was 621 billion shekels, with 100 billion of that on the wars.

During 2024, the regime raised 278 billion shekels - 79% through bond market. Another 19% was raised in global bond issues and the rest in domestic non-tradable debt.

Last March, the Zionist regime raised a record \$8 billion in an

international offering of 10 and 30-year bonds.

Since the start of the Gaza war, which began on Oct. 7, 2023, Israel has raised 360 billion shekels - 272 billion of which locally and 83 billion globally.

It raised 160 billion shekels in 2023 and 63 billion in 2022.

Israel's budget deficit reached 6.9% in 2024, its highest level since 11.6% in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. All three agencies lowered the Zionist regime's credit rating in 2024.

EU Considers 'Staged Approach' to Suspending Syria Sanctions

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) – The European Union is considering a step-by-step suspension of multiple economic sanctions targeting Syria as it seeks to support the country's transition, while retaining some leverage, according to two internal documents seen by Reuters.

EU foreign ministers are expected to discuss suspending some Syrian sanctions during a meeting in Brussels on Jan. 27.

European capitals began reassessing their Syria policies after the ousting of president Bashar al-Assad by militant forces led by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) that the United Nations designates a terrorist group.

The documents, produced by the bloc's foreign policy arm ahead of the ministers' meeting, outline options for supporting Syria's transition and a roadmap for easing

sanctions.

"Broad consensus has emerged among EU member states on the need to ease the EU's sanctions framework in order to send a positive signal of support to the transition and new authorities," according to the proposed roadmap.

"At the same time, several EU MS (member states) have urged for prudence and maintaining some leverage vis-à-vis the new authorities, in case things do not evolve as hoped," it said, adding that "a staged approach should be employed".

A political agreement could be announced at the Jan. 27 meeting.

EU sanctions include bans on oil imports from Syria, as well as a ban on investment in the Syrian oil industry and a freeze on

any Syrian central bank assets in the EU.

The proposed roadmap indicates some existing sanctions, including those related to arms and entities linked to the former government, would not be suspended.

Options for supporting Syria mentioned in the paper on EU efforts include boosting humanitarian aid, gradually supporting reconstruction and considering allowing Syrian refugees residing in Europe to travel back and forth during a transition period.

Six EU member states - Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands - called earlier this month for the bloc to temporarily suspend sanctions on Syria in areas including transport, energy and banking.