

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- A Gallup poll released on Friday revealed a historic shift in U.S. public opinion, with 41% of Americans now sympathizing more with Palestinians, surpassing the 36% who sympathize with Israelis.

This marks the first time in 25 years that Palestinian sympathy has matched or exceeded Israeli sympathy. The shift has accelerated since Israel's military operations in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, which caused widespread destruction and loss of life. The most notable change has occurred among independents, where support for Israel has dropped significantly. Democrats overwhelmingly sympathize with Palestinians, while Republicans continue to favor Israel.

Pakistan, Afghanistan Declare 'Open War' After Intensified Border Clashes

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan and Afghanistan traded attacks in a dramatic escalation of tensions between the countries that Pakistan's defense minister said Friday means they are now in "open war."

Tensions have been high between the neighbors for months, with border clashes in October killing dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants.

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan's Taliban government of harboring militant groups that then stage attacks across the border and also of allying with its archrival India.

A Qatari-mediated ceasefire ended the fighting, although the two sides still occasionally trade fire. Several rounds of peace talks in Istanbul in November failed to produce a formal agreement.

Late Thursday, Afghanistan launched a cross-border attack on Pakistan, saying it was in retaliation for deadly Pakistani airstrikes on Afghan border areas Sunday.

Pakistan then carried out airstrikes in Kabul and two other Afghan provinces early Friday.

After the strikes Friday, Defense



Taliban fighters look up while manning an armed pickup truck at the Afghan side of the Ghulam Khan crossing with Pakistan in Khost province, Afghanistan, Feb. 27, 2026.

Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said in an X post that Pakistan had hoped for peace in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO forces in 2021 and expected the Taliban, which seized power in the country, to focus on the welfare of the Afghan people and regional stability.

Instead, he said that the Taliban had turned Afghanistan "into a colony of India," with which Pakistan has pe-

riodically engaged in wars, clashes and skirmishes since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947. India has had improved ties with Afghanistan recently, offering to enhance bilateral trade, to the annoyance of Islamabad.

"Our patience has now run out. Now it is open war between us," he said. There was no immediate reaction from Afghan officials.

Afghan authorities in the eastern Nangarhar province said that fighting was ongoing in the Torkham border area Friday morning. The province's information directorate said that Pakistani mortar fire hit civilian areas in Torkham, including a refugee camp, which had been evacuated overnight. In response, Afghanistan was targeting Pakistani army posts across the border, it said.

Asif, the Pakistani defense minister, accused Afghanistan of "exporting terrorism." Islamabad frequently levies the allegation at its western neighbor as militant violence has surged in Pakistan, accusing Afghanistan of supporting the Pakistani Taliban, or TTP, and outlawed Baloch separatist groups.

Pakistan accuses the TTP — which is separate from but closely allied with Afghanistan's Taliban — of operating from inside Afghanistan. Both the group and Kabul deny that charge.

Pakistan has also frequently accused neighboring India of backing the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army and the Pakistani Taliban, allegations New Delhi denies.

Jewish Settlers Take Prison Tour to Witness Torture of Palestinians

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- Israeli prison authorities gave a tour of a maximum-security facility to Jewish settlers, where they participated in a "Torah lesson" and observed the treatment of Palestinian prisoners, according to Israeli media.

Kobi Yaakobi, the head of Israel's prison system, invited 20 members from a synagogue in Har Homa, an illegal West Bank settlement near Al-Quds, to visit Nitzan maximum-security prison.

During the visit, Palestinian detainees, including alleged members of Hamas's Nukhba forces, were handcuffed and forced to lie on the ground while the visitors watched.

The settlers were also seen eating a meal in front of the prisoners, who were fasting for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Additionally, the settlers reportedly "blessed" the prison guards.

Israeli rights group B'Tselem condemned the situation, stating that the Zionist regime operates a "network of torture camps," where prisoners are subjected to abuse, inhuman conditions, deliberate starvation, and denial of medical care. B'Tselem further stated that these prisons are part of a broader effort to dismantle Palestinian society. The Israel Prison Service (IPS) confirmed that a "rabbi and his entourage" had visited the prison for a sermon and tour.

Yaakobi, who was appointed IPS chief in January 2024 by so-called security minister Itamar Ben

Gvir, has been involved in policies aimed at worsening the conditions of Palestinian prisoners.

Yaakobi is also under investigation for allegedly helping to suppress an inquiry into Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank.

According to Israeli data, at least 98 Palestinians have died in Israeli custody since October 2023, though rights group Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) suggests the actual toll is likely higher, as hundreds of detainees from Gaza remain missing.

On February 8, Israel returned 120 bodies and human remains of Palestinians to Gaza without providing details on their identities or causes of death. The remains were handed over in plain white bags and were later examined by forensic teams in Gaza.

In October, the occupying regime had previously returned the bodies of 120 Palestinians, prompting accusations from Gaza officials that Israel had stolen organs from the deceased.

The allegation follows a long-standing controversy over organ theft, with reports dating back to 2013 when Swedish journalist Donald Bostrom published an article detailing the theft of organs from deceased Palestinians at the so-called Israeli institute of forensic medicine (Abu Kabir). Dr. Yehuda Hiss, the institute's former director, had admitted to taking organs from bodies during autopsies in a 2000 interview.

Modi's Visit to Israeli Occupied Lands Sparks Outrage in India

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Israeli Knesset in Occupied Al-Quds on Thursday, declaring India's unwavering support for the occupying regime and calling for expanded cooperation across trade, military, and technology.

Modi stated, "India stands with Israel, firmly, with full conviction, in this moment, and beyond."

His remarks came in a chamber that included Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague, and president Isaac Herzog, whose regime faces genocide proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Modi praised what he described Israel's resolve, courage,

and achievements, citing ancient trade links and the role of Indian-origin Jewish communities in the Israeli occupied territories, including on the battlefield.

Modi highlighted the deepening strategic partnership since 2017, framing India as a fast-growing economy and Israel as a technological powerhouse.

He touted military cooperation, citing a 2023 MoU, and advanced technologies including AI, semiconductors, quantum research, and digital finance.

Modi also reaffirmed India as Israel's largest arms buyer, investing \$20.5 billion in military equipment from 2020 to 2024, while bilateral trade reached \$3.9 billion in 2024.

The visit sparked widespread outrage in India. Social media erupted with criticism, accusing Modi of supporting Israel's

genocide in Gaza, where more than 72,000 Palestinians have been killed and 171,000 injured.

Public interest lawyer Prashant Bhushan said Modi had turned India into a "satellite of genocidal Israel." On X, user Sidharth compared Modi's speech to accepting honors from Nazi Germany.

Activists and opposition figures condemned his complicity, saying he disregarded the massacre of civilians, the blockade of Gaza, and the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

The CPI(M)L group called the visit "disgraceful," while CPI(M) condemned it as complicity in Israel's ongoing assault on Palestinians.

Analyst Shanaka Anslam Perera criticized Modi's deals as transactional, suggesting Netanyahu was "buying an alliance"

through defense technology.

Authors and commentators, including Sakshi Narula and Sabria Chowdhury Balland, accused Modi of undermining India's sovereignty and moral authority, siding with a regime accused of mass killings and atrocities.

Netizens highlighted the stark contrast between India's official condemnation of Israeli annexation in the West Bank and Modi's personal embrace of Tel Aviv.

Many accused the prime minister of abandoning India's historic support for Palestinian self-determination.

Reactions ranged from outrage at celebrating a regime accused of genocide, to warnings that India risked becoming a subordinate partner in Israel's militaristic ambitions.

Houthi: Israeli Normalization Fuels Oppression Against Muslims

SANA'A (Dispatches) -- Leader of Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, warned that the normalization of ties with the Israeli regime only serves to intensify oppression against the Muslim nations and increases the costs of defeating the Zionist regime.

In a televised address on Thursday night, al-Houthi stated, "What the Arab regimes are doing under the guise of normalizing relations with the Zionist regime only increases the oppression against Islamic nations."

He added that with this approach, the cost of defeating and collapsing the Zionist regime grows by the day.

His remarks came amid ongoing U.S. efforts to encourage normalization between Muslim countries and Israel. The United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Bahrain had joined the Abraham Accords in 2020, a move that was heavily criticized by Palestinians, who viewed it as a betrayal.

In his speech, al-Houthi also referred to Israel's expansionist ambitions. He pointed to the regime's open intentions to dominate a vast swath of land within the Islamic Ummah, specifically referencing the "Greater Israel" concept.

This notion, which envisions Israeli control over territories including parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, has been increasingly mentioned in Israeli political discourse.

In August 2022, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed a strong connection to this vision, describing it as a "historical and spiritual mission."

Similarly, U.S. Ambassador to Israeli occupied territories Mike Huckabee echoed the claims, telling Israeli media last week that it would be acceptable for Israel to expand to all the land promised to Abraham's descendants in biblical texts, from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates.

Al-Houthi criticized the Arab League's condemnation of these statements, questioning, "What good does condemning the annexation of the West Bank to occupied territories by 14 Arab countries do for the Palestinian people?"

He expressed frustration with Arab nations that issue statements of support for Palestinians while simultaneously providing financial aid to Israel.

The Ansarullah leader also condemned Israeli crimes in Gaza, referencing the genocidal Israeli war on Gaza that resulted in the deaths of more than 72,000 Palestinians and widespread destruction.

Al-Houthi pointed out the U.S.-Israeli efforts to disarm Hezbollah in Lebanon, stating that these actions were aimed at stripping Lebanon of its power and defense capabilities.

He emphasized that Israel's actions against Lebanon are not aimed at achieving peace, contrary to what some people might believe.

Resistance Groups Warn U.S. of Action if Troops Remain in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, which comprises six anti-terror groups, has issued a stern warning to the United States, threatening action if the country continues its military presence and interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

In a statement, the committee lashed out at the U.S. for failing to adhere to an agreement with Baghdad, which mandates the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq.

The committee condemned the violation of Iraqi airspace by U.S. forces, describing it as a direct threat to Iraq's security and a "blatant violation" of the country's sovereignty and dignity.

The statement emphasized that such actions leave the resistance groups with no choice but to take measures that align with their moral and legal responsibilities to defend their nation and the people's right to end the occupation.

In addition, the committee condemned U.S. interference in Iraq's domestic political landscape. It said Washington is trying to determine which political figures should hold office, specifically referring to the U.S.'s

opposition to the return of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Washington had threatened sanctions against Iraqi individuals and institutions if Maliki were to reclaim the prime ministership.

Reports indicate that the U.S. has given Iraq's largest parliamentary bloc until February 27 to withdraw Maliki's candidacy, but Maliki has refused to step aside, insisting on his bid for the premiership despite the U.S.'s objections.

The Iraqi resistance groups have long called for an end to foreign military presence in Iraq, a demand that intensified after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, which was based on false claims about weapons of mass destruction.

For over two decades, these groups have consistently opposed the occupation, and they continue to press for the removal of U.S. forces.

Currently, the U.S. military maintains approximately 2,500 troops in Iraq, deployed in the country since December 2021. Their presence has remained a point of contention, especially as local resistance groups see it as an ongoing violation of Iraq's sovereignty.