

U.S. rights advocates launch hunger strike for ceasefire in genocidal war against Gaza



Cynthia Nixon, flanked by Palestinian rights advocates, speaks at the launch of a hunger strike outside the White House on November 27 [Ali Harb/Al Jazeera]

Washington, November 28 (RHC)-- State lawmakers and Palestinian rights supporters, joined by actor and progressive advocate Cynthia Nixon, have launched a five-day hunger strike outside the White House to demand a ceasefire in Gaza.

At a news conference on Monday, the activists decried U.S. President Joe Biden's role in supporting the Israeli offensive in Gaza and called for an immediate end to the fighting.

The hunger strike adds to the growing demand for a ceasefire from activists, artists and politicians, as well as staff members working in the US government. But Biden has so far resisted such calls, voicing unwavering support for Israel. Biden has also pledged more than \$14 billion in additional U.S. aid to Israel — funds that advocates say are contributing to the Israeli violence.

The protesters at Monday's event stressed that public opinion polls show that most Americans back a ceasefire. They also underscored the scale of the destruction in Gaza, where more than 14,800 Palestinians have died. United Nations experts have warned that the conflict puts Palestinians "at grave risk of genocide."

"How many more Palestinians must be killed before you call for a ceasefire, President Biden? We cannot wait any longer," said Iman Abid, an organizer with the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR).

The hunger-strikers said that the continued pause demonstrates that diplomacy — not bombs — can solve the crisis in Gaza.

Israeli leaders, however, have suggested that they will resume the bombing with more intensity once the truce expires. They have also warned residents from northern Gaza against returning to their homes. "The area north of the Gaza Strip is a combat zone, and it is forbidden to stay there," Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee said last week.

This week's hunger strike in Washington, DC, is organized by Palestine solidarity advocates, progressive Jewish groups as well as Arab and Palestinian-American organizations.

Best known for her work in the TV series *Sex and the City* and her run in the 2018 New York governor's race, Cynthia

Nixon used her speech at Monday's event to highlight the carnage in Gaza, including the killings of dozens of journalists and UN workers as well as the destruction of entire neighbourhoods.

"Our president's seeming disregard for the incredible human toll Israel's far-right government is exacting on innocent civilians does not remotely reflect the desire of the overwhelming majority of Americans," she said.

"And I would like to make a personal plea to a president — who has himself experienced such devastating personal loss — to connect with that empathy for which he is so well-known and to look at the children of Gaza and imagine that they were his children.

"We implore him that this current ceasefire must continue, and we must build off it to begin to negotiate a more permanent peace. We cannot keep letting American tax dollars aid and abet the killing and starvation of millions of Palestinians. 'Never again' means never again — for anyone."

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