

Israel-Hamas war

US vetoes UN resolution calling for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Vote came after secretary-general used rarely exercised power to warn of humanitarian crisis



Robert Wood, the US's representative to the UN, raises his hand on Friday, as the country vetoed a security council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war © AFP/Getty Images

Felicia Schwartz in Washington YESTERDAY

The US vetoed a UN security council resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the war between Israel and Hamas.

The vote on the draft resolution put forward by the United Arab Emirates underscored the US and Israel's growing diplomatic isolation, as the Israel Defense Forces continue to press the [military effort against Hamas](#) in southern Gaza.

Thirteen security council members voted in favour of the resolution. The UK abstained.

Speaking after the vote, US deputy ambassador to the UN Robert Wood said Washington could not support an unconditional ceasefire, which would only benefit Hamas.

“This is not only unrealistic but dangerous, it would simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on October 7,” Wood said, adding it would “only plant the seeds for the next war”.

The US and the UK also criticised the draft for not including language condemning Hamas's October 7 attack, in which the group killed 1,200 Israelis and took more than 200 hostages.

The vote came after UN secretary-general António Guterres made use of a rarely exercised power to warn of an impending [humanitarian crisis](#) in Gaza and push for a vote on a ceasefire. His use of Article 99 of the UN Charter was the first time the authority had been used in more than 50 years.

More than 17,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in Israel's air and ground attacks on the strip, which it launched in response to the Hamas incursion in October.

To be adopted, a resolution needs nine votes in favour and cannot be vetoed by any of the five permanent members of the security council.

Arab foreign ministers were in Washington on Friday meeting with US secretary of state Antony Blinken to press him to support the resolution and for the US to do more to bring about an immediate end to the fighting.

“Our message is consistent and clear that we believe that it is absolutely necessary to end the fighting immediately,” Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan told reporters earlier Friday. “One of the disturbing facts of this conflict is that ending the conflict and the fighting doesn't seem to be the main priority for the international community.”

Faisal was joined on the visit by the foreign ministers of Jordan, Qatar, Turkey, Egypt and the [Palestinian Authority](#).

The US and Israel oppose an immediate ceasefire, which they say will leave Hamas in control of Gaza and will not resolve the fate of more than 100 hostages who remain in the strip.

The US has instead pressed for temporary humanitarian pauses allowing for the release of hostages and increased humanitarian aid. Washington has urged Israel to conduct its campaign in the south in a more targeted way and has insisted that its current military operation cannot cause the kind of mass displacement it did in Northern Gaza.

The UN vote in New York came a day after seven mortar rounds landed in the US embassy compound in Baghdad, Iraq, again raising fears that the conflict in Gaza could widen in the region. The US has said Iranian-backed militias continue to pose a threat to its military personnel in Iraq and Syria.

Asked on Friday if Washington would respond to the embassy compound attack in Baghdad, National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said “we do what we do

to protect ourselves, act in self defence [and] we don't telegraph our punches".

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