

# How the US is arming Israel’s genocide in Gaza



A CLOSER LOOK

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“I think it’s a safe assumption to say that U.S. weapons are being used extensively in the current Israeli operations in Gaza,” Elias Yousif, arms transfer expert at US think tank the Stimson Center, told the *Time* magazine last month.

Yousif’s assumption has been confirmed by *The Wall Street Journal*, who recently reported the shipment of deadly weapons by the US to its ironclad ally Israel, who has been pounding the besieged and densely populated Gaza Strip for two months in a disproportionate retaliation to Hamas rockets fired into Israel on October 7.

According to the WSJ report, the US has sent about 100 BLU-109, 2,000-pound bunker-buster bombs due to its ability to penetrate fortified and hard structures. The

Geneva Conventions prohibits the use of these high-impact ammunition in highly populated areas, and are only allowed to be used in “extreme circumstances of self-defence,” neither of which are applicable for Gaza.

Apart from the bunk busters, since the beginning of the Gaza war, the US has also given Israel “15,000 bombs and 57,000 155mm artillery shells” along with “more than 5,000 unguided Mk82 bombs, more than 5,400 Mk84 bombs, about 1,000 GBU-39 small-diameter bombs, and approximately 3,000 JDAMs.” Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) kits are capable of converting unguided bombs into GPS-guided weapons. In fact, according to a report by Bloomberg, Boeing has sped up delivery of as many as 1,800 JDAM



PHOTO: AFP

Thick clouds of smoke rise from buildings in northern Gaza after being hit by Israeli strikes on December 1, 2023.

**By arming the genocide in Gaza, the US is aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity. The onus is on the international community—many of these powerful countries are also Israel’s allies and arms suppliers—the UN, especially the Security Council—of which, unfortunately, the US is a permanent member with a vetoing power—and the ICC, to stop the insane civilian killing spree in Gaza. This is no longer a war against Hamas resistance force; this is a war against civilians, against children. This is genocide unfolding in real time.**

US used these bombs in its war in Afghanistan—and also in the Vietnam War—but its usage in the cramped Gaza Strip has proven to be deadly, claiming thousands of civilian lives. It’s worth noting that

kits to apartheid Israel, after Israel started attacks on Gaza.

While the US has been opaque about its military support to Israel—apart from the \$14.5 billion military aid package for Israel, in addition

to the yearly \$3.8 billion military aid that it provides Israel since 2016 under a 10-year plan, and the warships and nuclear submarines sent to the Middle East—in stark contrast to its transparency during the shipment of arms to Ukraine, there is no doubt that US weapons, which are being provided with visible enthusiasm to the Israeli occupation forces, are being used to commit war crimes in Gaza.

This is, however, in direct violation of the Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) policy of the US, which ironically the Biden administration issued in February this year. The objective of the CAT policy is to guide the country’s arms sales decisions to other actors. The policy clearly states that the US will not transfer arms in cases when “more likely than not” these would be used to commit specific violations, which include

“grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, including

attacks intentionally directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such,” and “other serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law.”

Israel continues to commit all these violations. It has bombed UNRWA schools sheltering civilians, levelled housing complex in Jabalia refugee camp that has killed more than 100 civilians—shamelessly justifying it by suggesting that it also killed a Hamas leader—bombed ambulances and forcefully sieged hospitals, rendering them useless and killing civilian patients, choked premature infants to death by destroying their oxygen support, and still the US is supplying them with weapons, arms and ammunitions.

As if these were not enough, the US is also providing Israel with moral support. When Israel was ravaging the Al Shifa hospital, the US lent its support for the heinous war crime, with the US national security

spokesperson John Kirby confidently parroting Israeli narrative, telling reporters, “We have information that confirms that Hamas is using that particular hospital for a command and control mode... That is a war crime.” It has been weeks since the Israeli occupation forces sieged and moved out of the hospital after multiple assaults, arrests and casualties, but no evidence with any shred of credibility to support these claims has been provided by Israel and the US.

This is in stark resemblance to when, two decades ago, the then US President George W Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell had strongly articulated that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction to justify their war on the country. While the exact number of casualties from the 2003 US invasion of Iraq cannot be ascertained, it is estimated that between 280,771 and 315,190 people have died in direct

## We need to talk about climate migration



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That Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change is no longer news. Being a deltaic low-lying plain with a long coast, Bangladesh is geographically susceptible to natural disaster. Climate change has heightened that susceptibility and increased consequences and impacts.

Testimonies and lived experiences of the affected people in the Sundarbans region prove that climate-induced disasters in Bangladesh have been frequent and intensified largely after the large cyclones Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009. The Ovihashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) conducted a longitudinal research in Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira from July 2022 to September 2023, which found that the people of the Sundarbans region, over the last 15 years, have been hit by cyclones once every 17 months, and been victims of floods, river erosion or erratic rainfall almost every year. The frequency of high tidal surge and the rapid salinisation of water and soil have emerged as a persistent threat for the communities. The impacts of frequent and intensified disasters lead to partial or complete loss of assets, livelihoods and well-being, which leave people in a continuous struggle to cope and survive.

The lack of need-based assistance and plans for sustainable adaptation push the majority of the vulnerable people to simply rely on loans to rebuild. Unfortunately, efforts to rebuild and restore their lives and livelihoods often become useless when the next disaster strikes, even before the loans are paid off. Thus, people fall into a debt trap.

The OKUP longitudinal research has proven that where the income and employment opportunities have almost dried up in the communities due to climate-induced disasters, and where most of the households have already fallen into debt traps, many people search for livelihoods outside their villages either in



The frequency of high tidal surge and the rapid salinisation of water and soil have emerged as a persistent threat for coastal communities in Bangladesh, driving up migration.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

a new district, a city or a town, while many of them go overseas to find employment to survive.

As per OKUP research, 59 percent households in the Sundarbans region have at least one member who resorted to migration to find work for their survival in the context of climate change. Meanwhile, 86 percent of them migrated internally to work in different seasons in a year, and 14 percent people migrated abroad. Most of the internal migrants work as contractual labourers in agriculture, brick kilns, construction or daily wage-based labour.

These types of jobs are treated as informal sector work, and thus are excluded in the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, amended in 2013 and 2018, as well as the Bangladesh Labour Rules, 2015, amended in 2022. The exclusion of

informal sector workers in the labour law and regulations is a complete denial of fundamental rights and protection of the workers. Most of the seasonal migrants testified that they often face non-payment of wages and salaries, excessive work by force, no healthcare, and many other forms of exploitations, but cannot claim any justice or remedies due to being excluded in the law.

On the other hand, data from the

some of them were not provided any work permits at all. Some returnees stated that they had fled without paying. Many migrants who were recruited by small companies lost their jobs all of a sudden because the companies shut down operations without any notice and without giving any reason. They all became undocumented and fell into more exploitative conditions.

The returnee migrant workers, both internal or international, and the families of the current migrant workers stated that migration was never a choice for them. They opted to migrate mostly because they were compelled to pay off their loans and rebuild their lives in the context of persistent threats by climate-induced disasters. Lack of good governance and accountability in the recruitment system as well as lack of protection measures push them into more risks and vulnerabilities, towards an undignified life as victims of trafficking or forced labour.

To address climate change and its impacts, the Bangladesh government has several plans, policies and strategies. It has also ratified various international conventions, protocols, compacts and adopted national laws, policies and rules to ensure safe, orderly and responsible migration. However, when it comes to climate-induced migration, policy frameworks are disconnected from reality or limited.

Being a front-runner in the climate negotiations and having a firm commitment to promote safe and orderly migration, Bangladesh must recognise the interconnections between climate change and migration and raise the issue in the negotiations within the UNFCCC mechanisms, including the ongoing COP28. The government must create opportunities of regular pathways for migration of the people who are victims of climate change, particularly youths. They must demand funds from the Loss and Damage Fund for enhancing transformative skills and capacities of the affected people to make them competent for employment in both local and international labour markets.

It is also immensely important for the government to ensure appropriate protection for migrant workers, both internal and international, to protect them from trafficking and forced labour. Otherwise, it may cause further detrimental impacts on the families and communities.

### CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

#### ACROSS

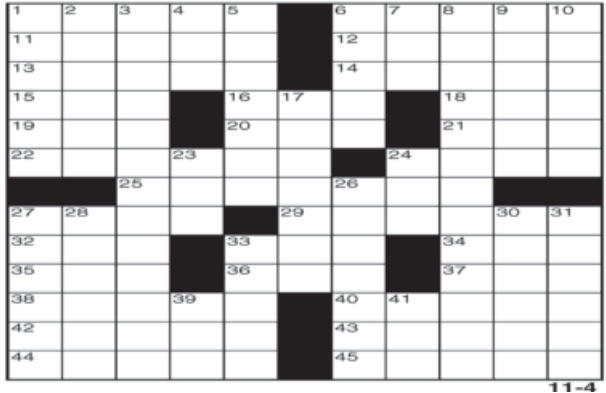
- 1 Half of a ‘60s group
- 6 Mixes
- 11 Seething
- 12 Principle
- 13 Jacket part
- 14 Reunion attendee
- 15 Vein yield
- 16 High hit
- 18 Oahu souvenir
- 19 Roofing supply
- 20 USN rank
- 21 Tourist stop
- 22 Flight makeup
- 24 Hill dwellers
- 25 Fit
- 27 Bottle topper
- 29 Anxious
- 32 Current unit

- 33 Half of hex-
- 34 Pod veggie
- 35 Crooner
- Torné
- 36 “Man on the Moon” band
- 37 — Lobos
- 38 Gladden
- 40 Set off
- 42 Bolshevik leader
- 43 Jessica of “Tootsie”
- 44 Mount
- 45 Display disdain

#### DOWN

- 1 Trial episodes
- 2 Turkish peak
- 3 Folded flier
- 4 Eroded
- 5 “Being There”

- star
- 6 Ticket remnants
- 7 High rating
- 8 Ramp, e.g.
- 9 Show mercy
- 10 Beer hall mugs
- 17 Like driftwood
- 23 Quill need
- 26 Zoo resident
- 26 Zoo residents
- 27 Caravan critters
- 28 Brunch dish
- 30 “Mad Max” director
- 31 Lent ender
- 33 Leaning
- 39 Suit accessory
- 41 Scathing review



### FRIDAY’S ANSWERS

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I	D	I	O	M		E	J	E	C	T
P	E	S	T	O		N	A	T	T	Y
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F	A	T	E	S		A	S	T	O	R

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