

Opinion | US elections 2024

United States - How can I vote for Kamala Harris if she supports Israel's war? Here is my answer

Thursday 31 October 2024, by [SANDERS Bernie](#) (Date first published: 30 October 2024).

Trump says Netanyahu is doing a good job and Biden is holding him back. Even on this issue, Trump is worse

'This is the most consequential election in our lifetimes.' Photograph: *Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images*

I understand that there are millions of Americans who disagree with [Joe Biden](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) on the terrible war in Gaza. I am one of them.

While Israel had a right to defend itself against the horrific Hamas terrorist attack of 7 October 2023, which killed 1,200 innocent people and took 250 hostages, it did not have the right to wage an all-out war against the entire Palestinian people.

It did not have the right to kill 42,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of whom were children, women and the elderly, or injure over 100,000 people in [Gaza](#). It did not have the right to [destroy Gaza's infrastructure](#) and housing and healthcare systems. It did not have the right to bomb every one of Gaza's 12 universities. It did not have the right to block humanitarian aid, causing massive malnutrition in children and, in fact, starvation.

And that is why I am doing everything I can to block US military aid and offensive weapons sales to the rightwing extremist Netanyahu government in Israel. And I know that many of you share those feelings. And some of you are saying, "How can I vote for [Kamala Harris](#) if she is supporting this terrible war?" And that is a very fair question.

And let me give you my best answer. And that is that even on this issue, [Donald Trump](#) and his rightwing friends are worse. In the Senate and in Congress Republicans have worked overtime to block humanitarian aid to the starving children in Gaza. The president and vice-president both support getting as much humanitarian aid into Gaza as soon as possible.

Trump has said that Netanyahu is doing a good job and that Biden is holding him back. He has suggested that the [Gaza Strip](#) would make excellent beachfront property for development. It is no wonder Netanyahu prefers to have Donald Trump in office.

We cannot sit this election out. Trump has to be defeated

But even more importantly, and this I promise you, after Harris wins we will, together, do everything we can to change US policy toward Netanyahu - including an immediate ceasefire, the return of all hostages, a surge of massive humanitarian aid, the stopping of settler attacks on the West Bank, and the rebuilding of Gaza for the Palestinian people.

And let me be clear. We will have, in my view, a much better chance of changing US policy with Harris than with Trump, who is extremely close to Netanyahu and sees him as a like-minded, rightwing extremist ally.

But let me also say this, and I deal with this every single day as a US senator. As important as Gaza is, and as strongly as many of us feel about this issue, it is not the only issue at stake in this election.

If Trump wins, women in this country will suffer an enormous setback and lose the ability to control their own bodies. That is not acceptable.

If Trump wins, to be honest with you, the [struggle against the climate crisis is over](#). While virtually every scientist who has studied the issue understands that the climate crisis is real and an existential threat to our country and the world, Trump believes it is a "hoax". And if the United States, the largest economy in the world, stops transforming our energy system away from fossil fuel, every other country - China, Europe, all over the world, they will do exactly the same thing. And God only knows the kind of planet we will leave to our kids and future generations.

If Trump wins, at a time of enormous income and wealth inequality, he will demand even more tax breaks for the very richest people in our country, while cutting back on programs that working families desperately need. The rich will only get richer, while the minimum wage will remain at \$7.25 an hour, and millions of our fellow workers will continue to earn starvation wages.

Did you all see the recent [Trump rally at Madison Square Garden](#)? Well, I did, and what I can tell you is that as a nation, as all of you know, we have struggled for years against impossible odds to try to overcome all forms of bigotry - whether it is racism, whether it's sexism, whether it's homophobia, whether it's xenophobia, you name it.

We have tried to fight against bigotry, but that is exactly what we saw on display at that unbelievable Trump rally. It was not a question of speakers getting up there and disagreeing with Kamala Harris on the issues. That wasn't the issue at all. They were attacking her simply because she was a woman and a woman of color. Extreme vulgar sexism and racism. Is that really the kind of America that we can allow?

So let me conclude by saying this. This is the most consequential election in our lifetimes. Many of you have differences of opinion with Harris on Gaza. So do I. But we cannot sit this election out. Trump has to be defeated. Let's do everything we can in the next week to make sure that Kamala Harris is our next president.

Bernie Sanders

P.S.

- The Guardian. Wed 30 Oct 2024 16.30 CET:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/oct/30/bernie-sanders-israel-gaza-harris-trump>

[Bernie Sanders](#) is a US senator, and chair of the health education labor and pensions committee. He represents the state of Vermont, and is the longest-serving [independent](#) in the history of Congress

- *Bernie Sanders' articles in the Guardian:*

<https://www.theguardian.com/profile/berniesanders>

- Support the Guardian

Available for everyone, funded by readers

[Contribute](#)

[Subscribe](#)