

U.S. citizen Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, was executed by Hamas in late August after being taken hostage from an Israeli music festival and held in Gaza for more than 300 days. In response, a bipartisan roster of U.S. officials immediately pledged to hold Hamas accountable. On August 31, 2024, President Joe Biden [issued](#) a statement saying, “Make no mistake, Hamas leaders will pay for these crimes,” while Vice President Kamala Harris [issued](#) a statement saying, “The threat Hamas poses to the people of Israel—and American citizens in Israel—must be eliminated and Hamas cannot control Gaza.” On September 1, 2024, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [vowed](#) that “Hamas will be held accountable.”

Washington policymakers should make good on these promises in the following ways:

1. Hamas Leadership: Support Israel’s campaign to kill or capture Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and other Hamas leaders at large, both inside and outside Gaza.

This support starts with recently unsealed Justice Department indictments for the murder and hostage-taking of Americans but continues with demands made of countries like Qatar, Turkey, and Lebanon for extraditions, and an advertising campaign in Gaza offering a very large reward for information leading to the capture or death of Yahya Sinwar. The United States should also make clear to all countries that it supports Israeli efforts to kill or capture Hamas officials wherever they reside.

2. Hamas and partner networks: Within the United States and overseas, lead a crackdown on Hamas networks.

The Department of Justice should move forward with indictments of known individuals and groups in the United States providing material support to Hamas and those associated with Hamas, domestically and abroad. The Departments of the Treasury and State should also target Hamas’s support network of terrorist entities in and out of the Gaza Strip. Sanctions have not yet been imposed on organizations such as the Popular Resistance Committees, Abdul al-Qadir al-Husseini Brigades, and the Palestinian Freedom Movement. These armed organizations coordinate attacks on Israeli troops and territory with known designated Palestinian terrorist factions. Palestinian organizations that provide material support to Hamas and coordinate attacks with them should be held accountable for their actions. Hamas networks in foreign countries, including South Africa, should be targeted with sanctions as well.

3. Munitions To Israel: With U.S partners, publicly send Israel a series of additional munitions to help it wage an offensive against Iran’s terrorist proxies.

Alongside a public show of materiel support for Israel, provided without conditions or caveats, the administration should use its leverage and influence to compel the United Kingdom and Canada to lift any holds or restrictions on defense exports to Israel. Sinwar must see momentum shifting toward international support for Israel and be disabused of any dreams of the United States again withholding weapons from Israel.

4. Qatar: Bring immediate and intense pressure to bear on Qatar to cut off all political and financial lifelines it provides to Hamas.

Pressure on Qatar should include threats to remove Qatar’s status as a major non-NATO ally; move Al Udeid Air Base assets; impose sanctions on Qatari officials, instrumentalities, and assets; and impose sanctions on Qatar’s Al-Jazeera Media Network. Qatar should be compelled to close all Hamas offices and operations, freeze and turn over to the United States all Hamas-connected assets, and turn over to the United States or Israel all Hamas officials who remain in the country.

5. Egypt: Bring immediate and intense pressure to bear on Egypt to permanently cut off Hamas supply routes above and below the Egypt-Gaza border.

Pressure on Egypt should include threats to withhold a significant amount of U.S. foreign assistance and impose sanctions on Egyptian officials and instrumentalities responsible for the Hamas smuggling operation. The United States must articulate that an underground wall built on the Egypt side of the border with Gaza — like the one that exists on the Israeli-Gaza border — is a priority for the United States and is in our national long-term interests. Egypt should also be compelled to fully cooperate with Israel in a joint monitoring operation to prevent above-ground smuggling.

6. Turkey: Bring immediate and intense pressure to bear on Turkey to cut off all political and financial lifelines provided to Hamas.

Pressure should include threats to impose sanctions on Turkish officials or entities that provide material support to Hamas. Turkey should be compelled to close all Hamas offices and operations, freeze and turn over to the United States all Hamas-connected assets, including Ismail Haniyeh's assets reportedly in Turkish banks, and turn over to the United States or Israel all Hamas officials who remain in the country.

7. Lebanon: Bring immediate and intense pressure to bear on Lebanon to cut off all political and financial lifelines provided to Hamas.

Pressure should include threats to withhold a significant level of foreign assistance and impose sanctions on Lebanese officials or entities that provide material support to Hamas. Lebanon should be placed on the Financial Action Task Force's grey list — and if no action is taken, on its black list — for facilitating support to a terrorist organization. Further, the United States should provide intelligence support for Israeli strikes anywhere in Lebanon, including Beirut, to kill Hamas operatives and destroy their infrastructure — including any co-located with Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and/or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Lebanon should be compelled to close all Hamas offices and operations, freeze and turn over to the United States all Hamas-connected assets, and turn over to the United States or Israel all Hamas officials who remain in the country.

8. China: Target China with economic and political pressure for subsidizing Hamas through oil imports and from Iran.

U.S. oil sanctions on Iran are already on the books, they just aren't being enforced. President Biden should inform President Xi Jinping that the United States will be pursuing maximalist sanctions enforcement targeting all Chinese entities involved in illicit trade with Iran, Hamas's chief terror sponsor, including state-owned enterprises. The administration should move forward with identifying Chinese ports that accept Iranian oil, as mandated by the newly enacted SHIP Act, and impose secondary sanctions on those ports.

9. Iran: Increase other forms of pressure on Iran.

Pressure should include ending Iranian access to previously inaccessible Iraqi electricity payments and any other funds made available for Iran's use, triggering the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran at the Security Council, and an all-out diplomatic push to get the United Kingdom and the European Union to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

10. International Organizations: Fight back against Hamas allies within international organizations.

Hamas counts the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC) as key allies. The current U.S. unwillingness to confront these institutions gives Sinwar hope. The White House should end its opposition to sanctions threats against the ICC and its chief prosecutor and instead lead an aggressive diplomatic campaign to get the ICC's top donors — Japan and Germany among them — to end the illegitimate and baseless investigation of Israeli leaders (which also puts Americans at risk). The administration should put forward a UN Security Council resolution condemning Hamas and all its state sponsors — forcing Russia and China to defend Hamas and potentially veto it. The administration should also leverage U.S. funding of the UN regular budget and other agencies to fight back against pro-Hamas, anti-Israel activity.