

Groups urge Biden to halt \$735 million weapons sale to Israel



A US-made Apache Longbow helicopter flies in front of a control tower at Ramon Air Base in southern Israel

New York, June 10 (RHC)-- Peace advocates and pro-Palestinian groups in the United States are calling on President Joe Biden to halt a \$735 million sale of precision-guided bombs to Israel that the Biden administration has fast-tracked.

“We are knowingly transferring weapons to a country that is not only engaged in aggression but also a massive violation of human rights,” said Huwaida Arraf, co-chair of the Palestine subcommittee of the National Lawyers Guild and organiser for Palestinian rights in the United States. “Our government is enabling Israel, not just with the billions of dollars that we send to Israel, but by shielding Israel from any

kind of accountability,” Arraf told Al Jazeera.

A coalition of more than 100 groups, including Churches for Middle East Peace, Jewish Voice for Peace, the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Democratic-leaning political groups Justice Democrats, MoveOn, Indivisible, and the Sunrise Movement, signed an open letter to Biden.

“The planned arms sales to Israel would send a signal of support for Israel’s recent conduct in occupied Gaza and East Jerusalem, which includes likely violations of international humanitarian law,” the groups said in the letter.

“We believe moving ahead with these sales would undermine US moral values, national security interests, and support likely violations of international humanitarian law by sending a green light for Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights,” the groups said.

The Biden administration formally notified Congress of the planned \$735m weapons sale on May 5, giving legislators 15 days to raise objections. The State Department issued a licence on May 21 to manufacturer Boeing Corp to proceed with the sale.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders filed resolutions in Congress to block the sale under the US arms control law. Those failed on procedural grounds disappointing opponents of the sale who had hoped to at least try to force a debate and a vote in Congress, advocates said.

“These weapons sales, they are often rubber-stamped, and there is a real lack of transparency in the way that they work,” said Beth Miller, senior government affairs manager for Jewish Voice for Peace. “We all just saw, over these last couple of weeks, exactly how the Israelis use these weapons,” Miller told Al Jazeera.

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