

U.S. Muslim congresswoman calls on U.S. to reconsider billions in aid to Israel



Washington, August 20 (RHC)-- Democratic Representative Ilhan Omar has said that billions of dollars of U.S. aid to Israel should be tied to its treatment of Palestinians, urging Washington to reconsider the funds to the Tel Aviv regime which is engaged in oppression of the Palestinian people.

Omar said that Congress should reconsider the annual U.S. aid allocated to Israel, after the regime banned Muslim Congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib from travelling to Jerusalem al-Quds and the occupied West Bank.

"We give Israel more than \$3 [billion] in aid every year. This is predicated on them being an important ally in the region and the only democracy in the Middle East. But denying a visit to duly elected members of Congress is not consistent with being an ally, and denying millions of people freedom of movement or expression or self-determination is not consistent with being a democracy," Omar said at a press conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Omar, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also stated that U.S. aid should be contingent upon Israel's activity in Palestine. "We must be asking, as Israel's ally, that [Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin] Netanyahu's government stop the expansion of settlements on Palestinian lands and ensure full rights for Palestinians if we are to give them aid."

U.S. military aid to Israel has skyrocketed over the past several years while the regime's forces are engaged in blatant human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere. The United States and Israel signed an agreement in September 2016 to give Israel \$38 billion in military assistance over the next decade, the largest such aid package in US history.

Israel announced on Thursday that it would prevent a visit by Tlaib and Omar, both Democratic members of the US House of Representatives, over their criticism of Israel.

The decision by Israel appears to be an unprecedented move against American members of Congress. Even AIPAC, a pro-Israel lobbying group in Washington, criticized Israel for barring the pair from traveling there.

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