

Activists renew call to end Washington's aid to Israel

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Protesters rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC on May 29 to demand an end to US aid to Israel after the Israeli military's 11-day bombardment of the Gaza Strip left more than 200 Palestinians dead [Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP]

Washington, June 6 (RHC)-- Palestinian rights advocates in the United States have condemned a recent visit to the U.S. capital by Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, renewing their calls for an end to unconditional U.S. military aid to Israel.

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham told reporters last week that Israel would be requesting \$1bn to “replenish” its Iron Dome missile interception system, as well as buy munitions for the Israeli air force, in the aftermath of 11 days of fighting between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian faction that governs the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli bombardment of the besieged Palestinian territory killed 235 Palestinians, including 67 children, and displaced at least 58,000 Palestinians. Twelve people in Israel, including two children, were killed by rockets fired by Palestinian groups in Gaza.

“The State Department is already trying to rush through \$735 million in additional weapons sales on top of the annual \$3.8 billion American taxpayers provide Israel every year,” Mohamad Habehh, a national development coordinator with American Muslims for Palestine, told Al Jazeera.

“To come to the United States and ask for another \$1 billion after the wholesale destruction of Gaza, after the murder of over 60 children, is unfathomable.”

Reports of a meeting between Gantz and U.S. President Joe Biden’s national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, last week did not indicate whether Israel’s expected request for \$1 billion in military aid had been made formal.

Gantz tweeted that he discussed “protecting Israel’s QME” with Sullivan. QME stands for “qualitative military edge”, denoting Israel’s technological and military superiority that the US for decades has helped finance through generous aid packages that critics say embolden the Israeli government to act with impunity in the occupied Palestinian territories.

“American tax money should not be spent financing apartheid and ethnic cleansing, especially when there’s so much need right here in the United States,” said Habehh.

The National Security Council said in a statement that during the meeting, Sullivan emphasised the Biden administration’s “commitment to strengthening all aspects of the US-Israel security partnership, including support for the Iron Dome System.”

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