



[U.S. Secretary of State Blinken Travels to the Middle East in the Aftermath of Last Week's Israeli-Palestinian Ceasefire](#)

In his first official trip to the Middle East, Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine in an effort to prolong the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Blinken announced several new initiatives by the Biden administration to support Palestinians, including over \$38 million in new aid to assist with humanitarian support and the reconstruction of Gaza after nearly two weeks of Israeli bombardment of civilian and residential targets. Egypt and Jordan also pledged additional aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, as did Qatar. Additionally, Secretary Blinken confirmed that the United States would be re-opening its consulate in Jerusalem, which largely served Palestinians before it was shuttered by the Trump administration. During meetings with Jordanian and Egyptian officials, Blinken pledged that the United States was committed to working with its regional partners to ensure safety and stability in the illegally-occupied Palestinian territories.

Secretary Blinken's announcement of additional funding for Palestinian objectives brings the total amount promised by the Biden administration to roughly \$360 million. Much of this is the reinstatement of aid that was cut by the Trump administration, which had implemented a biased and one-sided approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The new Biden administration funding is conditional on it not being used to support Hamas however, which the United States still regards as a terrorist organization. Instead, the aid will be earmarked for the Palestinian Authority, which is internationally recognized as the legitimate governing body in the West Bank. To this end, Blinken was keen to recognize the relationship Jordan has with the Palestinian Authority during his trip to the region, and highlighted its ability to play a key role in the reconstruction and development of the Palestinian territories.

The ceasefire agreed upon by Israel and Hamas was brokered largely by Egypt, which has traditionally played a key role in negotiations involving Israelis and Palestinians. During their meeting in Cairo, Secretary Blinken and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi pledged to strengthen their bilateral coordination in order to maintain the ceasefire. Blinken also praised the Egyptian authorities for their role in brokering the peace agreement. Due to its proximity to Gaza, Egypt will likely play a key role in channeling aid from the United States to the Palestinian Authority. Blinken also pressed his Egyptian counterparts on several other issues, including the Sisi government's poor human rights record, and the release of several Americans currently detained arbitrarily in Egypt.

Despite successful talks with Egypt and Jordan, Secretary Blinken cautioned that there was much work to be done to ensure that the current ceasefire was secure. One potential issue comes from the fact that Israel is not keen on contributing humanitarian aid to Palestinian projects, despite the fact that they were responsible for the destruction of Palestinian property and territory in the first place. The United States also has work to do to improve its image among Palestinians, after the Trump administration pursued policies of fealty to Israel that were extremely damaging to the Palestinian cause for social justice. One way in which this could be achieved is through the United States reclaiming its role as an arbitrator in long-term negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and pushing for a legitimate two-state solution. At the very least, the initial actions taken by Secretary Blinken during his inaugural trip to the Middle East are promising for those who prioritize the important endeavor of justice and equality for Palestinians.