



Israel Fails to Comply with U.S. Humanitarian Access Demands in Gaza

Earlier this week, a group of international aid organizations came out saying that Israel has failed to meet with a series of U.S. demands intended to improve humanitarian access in Gaza. Despite this finding, the U.S. government has expressed that it will continue to maintain military aid to Israel – which has been decried as yet another instance of American nonfeasance in its Israeli foreign policy. The absence of concrete and meaningful policy consequences even in light of the evaluation from impartial entities is regrettable, and has prompted humanitarian groups to call for a reduction and reassessment of U.S. military support. Equally as troubling, Israel’s failure to comply with the measures has resulted in a further deterioration of the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and has pushed parts of the territory closer to famine.

A month ago, the Biden administration [sent a letter](#) to the Israeli government stating that they had 30 days to boost access to humanitarian aid, or risk cuts to military assistance. The letter was signed by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, and was originally privately sent to the Israeli government, but was soon leaked by journalists. The document began by referencing another letter sent by the United States back in April that would require the U.S. to continually assess the Israeli government’s adherence to humanitarian standards in Gaza. These statements were then followed by an expanded description of the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where it was noted that Israel’s numerous evacuation orders have forced an estimated 1.7 million people into a narrow coastal strip in Deir Al Balah. The extreme overcrowding that has happened as a result has created conditions that are a hotbed for deadly diseases. Those attempting to deliver humanitarian aid have also documented how Israel has frequently obstructed and delayed this process. It was further specified that at least 90% of humanitarian movements have been denied or impeded by the Israeli government, which has repeatedly imposed excessive restrictions and the arbitrary exercise of purported “security measures” that have prevented aid and humanitarian workers from reaching those in desperate need.

Since March, the amount of aid to Gaza has dropped by more than 50%, with September having the lowest quantity of assistance received during the past year. As such, it was demanded that Israel take immediate action to reverse the downward course of humanitarian efforts in Gaza, with a failure to do so threatening a decrease in U.S. military aid. The letter sent to Israel even included a detailed list of specific actions that needed to be undertaken in order to meet this requirement, while also outlining concerns regarding the potential approval of a UNRWA ban and the increased devastation that this would cause. Despite this and in a blatantly defiant manner, the Israeli government recently did in fact initiate the aforementioned ban, demonstrating that it lacks a fear of repercussions from the United States since the latter has yet to follow through on its threats of punishment and accountability for continuous Israeli violations. The demands laid out in the letter may have posed more significance if it were not for the fact that it concerned Israeli behavior that has been pervasive since the onset of the Gaza War, if not long before. To many observers, it is unsurprising that U.S. officials have failed to enforce their threats of consequences for Israel’s actions, as the use of the word “may” in the letter was indicative of this likelihood.

Humanitarian organizations have addressed, in great detail, the menacing scale of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with widespread famine imminently approaching. These entities have called upon the United States to issue an

immediate determination regarding Israeli violation of National Security Memorandum-20 and Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act – the laws that the U.S. would be failing to abide by should they continue to provide military aid to Israel in light of evidence of humanitarian obstructions. While the U.S. State Department claims that Israel has made sufficient progress that would no longer warrant a disruption to military assistance, humanitarian groups have shown otherwise. Aid workers on the ground have attested to Israel's failure to meet requirements, and have borne witness to the catastrophe that has transpired as a result.

Civilians in Gaza continue to suffer due to Israel's inhumane policies coupled with the U.S. government's inaction and unwillingness to punish Israel for its abusive behavior. Tens of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed, and for the nearly 2 million others that have been forcibly displaced, the Israeli hindrance of aid has created unimaginable suffering and hardship. This will only continue unless appropriate measures are taken to hold Israel accountable and put an end to any complicity in its war crimes and human rights violations.