

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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The U.S. Must Stop Arming Israel and Demand a Ceasefire

LA Jews for Peace doesn't know if Israel's bombardment of Gaza, combined with Israel's blockade of food, water, fuel, electricity, and medicines, constitutes genocide against the Palestinian people. But considering that the question is being debated¹ by scholars, human rights and state leaders, and even Jewish-American leaders², it is clear that what Israel is imposing on the Palestinian people is truly horrible and surely involves war crimes and crimes against humanity even if not actually genocide.

President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken urge Israel to restrain itself. But they undermine their own advice by (1) supplying Israel with weapons to continue its bombardment, (2) blocking resolutions at the United Nations to institute a ceasefire, and (3) steadfastly supporting Israel's right to defend itself, tacitly assuming that withholding food, water, fuel, electricity, and medicine and the carnage being imposed on the Palestinian people of Gaza constitutes self-defense.

On Dec.29, the Biden Administration announced it is going around Congress to sell Israel \$147.5 million in weapons³. To do that the Administration invoked a rarely used emergency provision that avoids a congressional review process generally required for arms sales to other nations. This is the second time the Biden Administration is bypassing Congress to arm Israel.

LA Jews for Peace calls for a major modification of American policy with respect to Israel and Palestine. The Biden Administration and Congress must:

- Stop the \$147.5 million arms sale announced Dec. 29. Adding weapons to Israel's arsenal, which is among the strongest military in the world⁴, is irresponsible. It will surely lead to more killing of Palestinian people in Gaza and destruction of their infrastructure. It might tip what is not a genocide into one.
- Lead an international effort to institute a permanent ceasefire guaranteed by a U.N. peacekeeping force. A ceasefire will stop Israel's bombing and ground war that is killing hundreds of people every day and destroying homes, Mosques, hospitals, and civic infrastructure. It will stop Hamas rockets that are keeping Israelis in a state of fear. It will prevent the current war from escalating into a regional/international conflagration. And most important, a permanent ceasefire will allow hostages to return home, much needed humanitarian materials to reach the starving people of Gaza, and rebuilding of Gaza to commence.

¹ Nov.13, 2023, *Time*. <https://time.com/6334409/is-whats-happening-gaza-genocide-experts/>.

² American Jewish Committee argues that it is not genocide, Nov.30, 2023. <https://www.ajc.org/news/5-reasons-why-the-events-in-gaza-are-not-genocide>.

³ Dec.30, 2023, *NY Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/30/world/middleeast/biden-us-israel-weapons-sale.html>.

⁴ Date, *U.S.News*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/rankings/strong-military>.