

More than 680 politicians, academics ask Biden to protect Palestinians' human rights

Now is the time for US leadership on Israel and Palestine

Dear President Biden,

We, the undersigned global coalition of leaders - from civil society to business, the arts and faith communities, politics and Nobel laureates - call for U.S. leadership to take action to help bring an end to Israel's institutionalized domination and oppression of the Palestinian people and protect their fundamental human rights. A sustainable and just peace - for all people - will remain elusive if U.S. policy holds to a political status quo devoid of justice and accountability.

Your administration has committed to a foreign policy "centered on the defense of democracy and the protection of human rights." More recently, you state you believe the Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve to live safely and securely and enjoy equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and democracy." For Palestinians, the space between these statements and their daily lives could be wider.

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Washington, June 20 (RHC)-- More than 680 political figures, academics, peace activists, and Nobel laureates have called on U.S. President Joe Biden to honor his commitments regarding protection of Palestinian rights, and to end the Israel's oppression.

The signatories, in an open letter published earlier this week, urged Biden to place “human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy” and to “help bring an end to Israel's institutionalized domination and oppression of the Palestinian people.”

“A sustainable and just peace - for all people - will remain elusive if US policy holds to a political status quo devoid of justice and accountability,” the letter read.

A political analyst says the U.S. is rebranding its relationship with Israel, not because the regime has changed under new prime minister Naftali Bennett, but because Washington has suffered humiliations at the hands of ousted premier Benjamin Netanyahu.

“Moving forward, the United States must address the root causes of the violence, which successive administrations have neglected. “Your administration must apply concerted diplomatic pressure to help end the ever-expanding discrimination and systemic oppression and ensure accountability for Israeli authorities that violate Palestinian rights,” the group wrote.

The signatories included Israel's former attorney general Michael Ben-Yair; former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg; former Irish President Mary Robinson; 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman; Israeli academic Ilan Pappé; American professor Noam Chomsky; and a number of British lawmakers among others.

The U.S. president on May 15th held a telephone conversation with then Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and reaffirmed his strong support for what he described as the regime's right to defend itself against retaliatory rocket attacks from Gaza-based Palestinian resistance factions.

Despite the fact that human rights groups have frequently called for investigations into war crimes committed by the Israeli military against Palestinians, the White House has opted not to speak critically of the Tel Aviv regime's actions.

After defeating Donald Trump in November 2020 elections to become the 46th president of the United States, Biden's administration alleged it would put human rights at the core of its foreign policy.

“The United States is committed to a world in which human rights are protected, their defenders are celebrated, and those who commit human rights abuses are held accountable,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken claimed in a statement in February.

This is while Washington has criticized the International Criminal Court's decision to launch an investigation into Israeli war crimes against Palestinians in the occupied territories, and has not taken any measures to hold Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman accountable for the assassination of dissident US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

“Only a consistent application of a rights-centered foreign policy can signal to Israel's leaders that violations of international law will no longer go unaccounted for. Mr President, now is the time to set a new benchmark in American foreign policy that leads with justice and paves the way toward lasting peace,” the letter read.

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