

*Joe Biden welcomed during visit
to Israel with billboards
denouncing Zionist apartheid
regime*

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Jerusalem, July 14 (RHC)-- Ahead of the arrival of the U.S. president to Tel Aviv, the Israeli rights group B'Tselem launched a campaign seeking to turn Biden's attention to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

The group put up billboards and digital screens in the West Bank cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah, stating: "Mr. President, this is apartheid."

"Without constant backing by the U.S., Israel would not have been able to politically, geographically and demographically re-engineer the area under its control; to impose military rule over millions of subjects and deny them rights for 55 years; to annex East Jerusalem to its sovereign territory; or to systematically discriminate against its Palestinian citizens," B'Tselem said in a statement released on Wednesday.

"The U.S. must acknowledge that the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea is governed by an apartheid regime, and change its attitude to Israel accordingly," said the group's executive director, Hagai El-Ad.

Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, made the controversial decision to unilaterally recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv in May 2018.

Palestinians view occupied East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, and view the U.S. embassy move as evidence Washington supports Israel's de facto annexation of the city. Biden has not reversed Trump's decision, and will press ahead with plans to build a new U.S. diplomatic compound on land that was confiscated from Palestinians using the 1950 Israeli Absentees' Property Law, as archives revealed earlier this week.

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