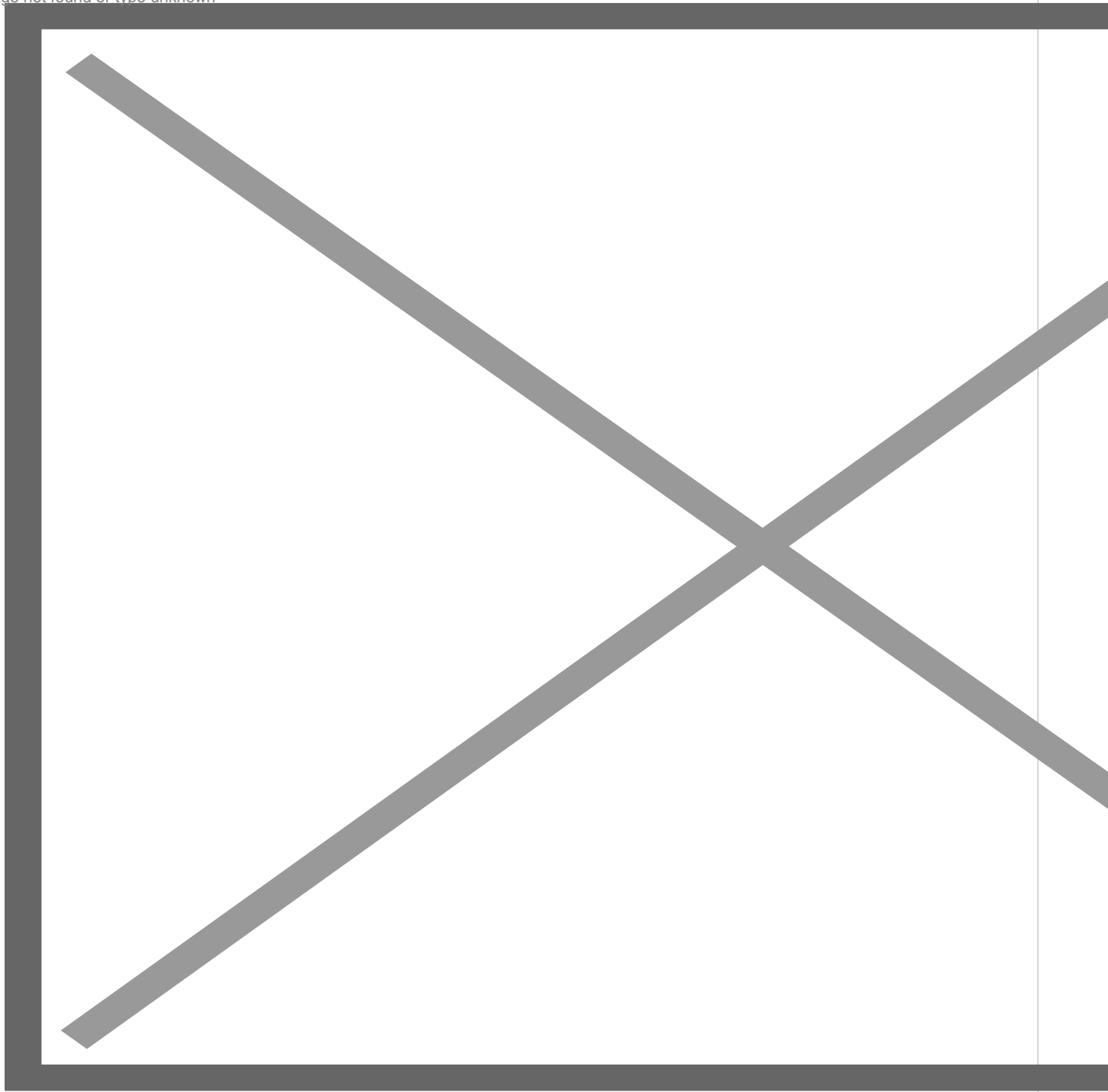


*Washington's unconditional
support for Israel gives Tel Aviv
cover to kill*

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Washington's unconditional support for Israel gives Tel Aviv cover to kill

Ramallah, July 4 (RHC)-- Washington's unwavering support for Israel has enabled and emboldened the right-wing Israeli government's escalating violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, analysts say.

As Israeli forces targeted the densely populated Jenin refugee camp with air attacks and ground raids involving hundreds of troops on Monday, the White House again underscored what it called Israel's "right to defend" itself.

"We support Israel's security and right to defend its people against Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist groups," the White House National Security Council said in a brief statement.

Experts say that response reflects U.S. President Joe Biden's unwillingness to rein in his country's top ally in the Middle East despite a pledge to center human rights in U.S. foreign policy – and as concerns around the scale of the Israeli attack in Jenin are mounting.

"I think we will continue to see – as has happened in the past – the U.S. administration run cover for the Israelis and let them get away with doing whatever they want," Daniel Levy, president of the US/Middle East Project think tank, told Al Jazeera in a television interview on Monday.

The Biden administration doesn't want the situation in the West Bank to blow up, but it won't risk its relationship with Israel, Levy said. "And that's why in particular things have gotten so bad."

Israel launched the attack on Jenin – one of many recent assaults on the refugee camp – on Monday, saying it is targeting armed Palestinian groups. At least nine Palestinians have been killed and dozens injured so far.

The attack, which followed the killing of four Israeli settlers by two Palestinian gunmen in the northern West Bank last month, included some of the worst Israeli air attacks in the occupied territory in decades.

In its brief statement, the White House did not mention Palestinian civilians or call for a de-escalation. Later on Monday, a State Department spokesperson said it is "is imperative to take all possible precautions to prevent the loss of civilian lives" while reiterating that Israel has a "right to defend its people."

Tariq Kenney-Shawa, a US policy fellow at Palestinian think tank Al-Shabaka, said the U.S. policy on the conflict keeps getting worse. "The Biden administration has leaned into its role as a complicit enabler of the Israeli occupation to the point it has all but abandoned even symbolic talking points of 'supporting a two-state solution'; or calls for calm," Kenney-Shawa told Al Jazeera in an email.

"The U.S. has shown, implicitly and explicitly, that it fully endorses Israel's actions no matter the consequences and that it holds Israel on a pedestal that exempts it from the same human rights norms and international standards that Washington holds the rest of the world to."

Ahmad Abuznaid, director of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, an advocacy group, also slammed Washington's position, but said it was unsurprising given continued US military aid to Israel.

Despite being accused of committing the crime of apartheid by leading human rights groups, including Amnesty International, Israel receives at least \$3.8 billion in U.S. aid annually. "The Biden administration's response, while Israel is massacring Palestinian people in Jenin refugee camp in the largest invasion since 2002, shows a cruel disregard for Palestinian life," Abuznaid told Al Jazeera in an e-mail.

"The Israeli apartheid state is the aggressor, colonizing Palestinian land and murdering Palestinian people, and to characterize its massive colonial violence as anything else is absurd."



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