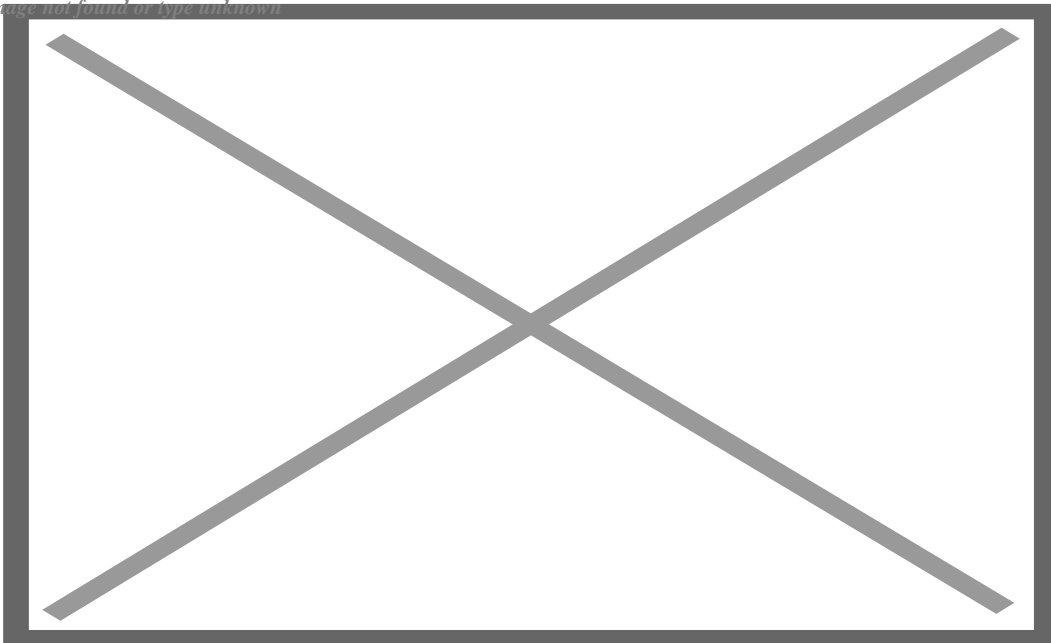


U.S. approves emergency sale to Israel of 14,000 tank shells without review of Congress

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Washington, December 11 (RHC)-- The U.S. Defense Department has pushed through an emergency sale of about 14,000 tank shells worth more than \$100 million to Israel without congressional review, the Pentagon announced over the weekend.

Fending off criticism over the sale from Palestinians and rights groups who say it does not align with Washington's stated effort to press Israel to minimise civilian casualties, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told ABC on Sunday that Washington is in almost constant contact with the Israelis "to ensure they understand what their obligations are."

In an address to the two-day Doha Forum event that started in the Qatari capital on Sunday, Antonio Guterres said he expected the "public order to completely break down soon" in Gaza. "And an even worse situation could unfold, including epidemic diseases and increased pressure for mass displacement into Egypt," he added.

Qatar, a key mediator of last month's seven-day truce, which saw 80 Israeli captives exchanged for 240 Palestinian prisoners and a flow of humanitarian aid, on Sunday said it was still working on a new truce deal. Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the Doha Forum that mediation efforts will continue to stop the war and have all captives released, but "unfortunately, we are not seeing the same willingness that we had seen in the weeks before".

"Our efforts as the state of Qatar along with our partners are continuing," he said, adding that Israel's relentless bombardment was "narrowing the window" for success.

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