

Genocide denial: U.S. House passes legislation to prohibit citing Gaza death toll



File photo shows an empty U.S. House of Representatives chamber (By Getty Images)

Washington, June 28 (RHC)-- The U.S. House of Representatives has approved legislation that would prevent State Department officials from citing casualty figures from the Gaza Health Ministry as the Israeli regime's genocidal war on the besieged strip rages on. The bill which was passed on Thursday now awaits Senate consideration.

In a moment when a congressional representative on the House floor whispered: "I can't believe this is actually happening" -- media reports say that despite its passage, the amendment was met with strong opposition from Palestinian-American Representative Rashida Tlaib, who labeled the decision "absolutely unconscionable" and indicative of a broader trend of dehumanization of Palestinians in the legislative body.

"Since 1948... there has been a coordinated effort, especially in this chamber, to dehumanize Palestinians and erase Palestinians from existence," Tlaib stated in her House floor speech on Wednesday.

The "Israeli apartheid" regime, she maintained, is carrying out a "genocide in Gaza, and in real time, and this amendment is an attempt to hide it." "This is genocide denial," she stressed.

"My colleagues want to prohibit our own U.S. officials from even citing the Palestinian death toll. So let me read it into the record. Here are the latest casualties of Palestinians killed: 37,718 Palestinians, including more than 15,000 Palestinian children and more than 86,377 Palestinians have been injured," citing figures from the Gaza Health Ministry.

Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf has previously testified that the actual death toll could be higher than reported, with many missing and presumed deceased under the debris of buildings bombed by Israeli forces since October 7.

The amendment initiative was led by Representatives Jared Moskowitz, Josh Gottheimer, Joe Wilson, Mike Lawler, and Carol Miller. Representative Barbara Lee also voiced her objections on the House floor, noting that the Gaza Health Ministry's data is "often the only information available about what is happening on the ground in Gaza."

"Israel has sealed Gaza's borders barring foreign journalists and others who can offer this reporting," Lee said. "The journalists and medical professionals who are there are unable to account for all of the bodies trapped under rubble and discovered in mass graves."

World Health Organization spokesperson Christian Lindmeier expressed confidence in the accuracy of the agency's figures, stating last month that the overall data remains consistent. The United States has reportedly provided \$6.5 billion in security assistance to Israel since the war on the Gaza Strip, a report says.

The amendment comes amid Washington's strong support for Israel amid the regime's war on Gaza. The US has supplied arms to Israel and vetoed several resolutions at the United Nations Security Council that demanded a ceasefire in Gaza.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas launched the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Tel Aviv has also blocked water, food, and electricity to Gaza, plunging the coastal strip into a humanitarian crisis.

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