

Top U.S. Republican lawmaker calls for Gaza pier to be shut down



Washington, June 28 (RHC)-- A senior U.S. Republican lawmaker has called on President Joe Biden's administration to shut down the so-called aid pier built off the coast of the Gaza Strip to be shut down, calling the structure ineffective, risky, and a waste of money.

"I urge the Administration to immediately cease this failed operation before further catastrophe occurs and consider alternative means of land and air-based humanitarian aid delivery," Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mike Rogers, wrote in a letter. Rogers argued that the so-called Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS), which costs at least \$320 million, is a "waste of taxpayer dollars" and has put the lives of U.S. personnel in danger.

The letter was sent to White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"As of June 19, JLOTS had only been operational about 10 days and had only moved 3,415 metric tons onto the beach in Gaza," Rogers pointed out. He also noted that three US service members suffered non-combat injuries while deployed on the pier.

Hamas has rejected America's establishment of a temporary floating pier designed to increase the amount of aid getting into Gaza as a publicity stunt "to beautify its ugly face."

Rogers has long voiced criticism regarding the efficiency of the U.S. pier in Gaza and called for it to be dismantled, but he had not previously expressed that view in a formal written letter to the Biden administration.

Part of the U.S.-built Gaza pier collapsed and swept into sea on May 25 as waves carried it toward the shores of the city of Ashdod, situated about 40 kilometers (24.8 miles) south of Tel Aviv, in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories.

A former top UN official dismisses the United States-built pier purportedly installed to transfer aid to Gaza, arguing it has failed to have any meaningful impact.

Biden claimed in his State of the Union in March that the Gaza pier would "receive large shipments carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelter" -- but observers say that none of that has been delivered.

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