

Kamala Harris meets with Israeli war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu at White House

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Vice President Kamala Harris, right, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appear before a meeting at the White House complex on July 25, 2024 [Julia Nihinson/AP Photo]

Washington, July 26 (RHC)-- U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on Thursday, Harris said that her commitment to Israel's existence and security was "unwavering", but that "far too many" innocent civilians had been killed in the war.

"What has happened in Gaza over the past nine months is devastating. The images of dead children and desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, sometimes displaced for the second, third or fourth time," Harris said. "We cannot look away in the face of these tragedies. We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the suffering. And I will not be silent."

Harris, the presumptive Democratic nominee after President Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign, said that she had urged Netanyahu to agree to a U.S.-backed ceasefire proposal. "It is time for this war to end and end in a way where Israel is secure, all the hostages are released, the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza ends, and the Palestinian people can exercise their right to freedom, dignity and self-determination," Harris said.

Harris also reiterated her support for Israel's right to defend itself, condemned Hamas as a "brutal terrorist organization," and listed the names of American captives believed to be in Hamas's captivity in Gaza.

In a nod to divisions over Israel and Gaza, Harris also called on Americans to acknowledge the "complexity" and "nuance" of the conflict. "Too often, the conversation is binary, when the reality is anything but," Harris said.

While Harris's remarks did not point to substantive policy differences with Biden, her forceful invocation of Palestinians' suffering drew a contrast with her boss's more subdued, mostly back-channel efforts to restrain Israel.

Biden's policy on Gaza has alienated progressive factions of the Democratic Party as well as many Muslim-Americans, a large number of whom live in Michigan, a key swing state that is considered crucial to the outcome of November's election.

Al Jazeera's Patty Culhane, reporting from Washington, said that Harris spent more time speaking about the suffering of Palestinians than Biden has, even as she sought to bolster her credentials as a pro-Israel figure.

"She talked about the number of starvations. The number of people who are food insecure. The number of people who have had to move several times. She talked about seeing pictures of dead children," Culhane said.

"You don't see that in the U.S. media. You don't see it on the front pages of newspapers. Almost hardly at all. There is very little discussion about the plight of the people in Gaza."

While Harris positioned herself to the left of Biden during her failed 2020 presidential run, she has a long track record of strong support for Israel.

After entering the U.S. Senate in 2017, her first overseas trip was to Israel and one of her first acts in office was to introduce a resolution opposing a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning the country.

Harris also spoke at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) annual convention that year, telling the audience that the bonds between the U.S. and Israel were "unbreakable" and "we can never let anyone drive a wedge between us."

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