

U.S. lawmakers urge maintaining Israeli aid without preconditions

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The call comes a week after House Democrats introduced a bill seeking to ban US aid to Israel from funding human rights abuses against Palestinians [File: Cliff Owen/AP Photo]

Washington, April 24 (RHC)-- More than 300 U.S. lawmakers have called on Washington to continue aid to Israel without conditions or reductions, one week after progressive Democratic legislators proposed a bill seeking to regulate American assistance in an effort to stop human rights abuse against Palestinians.

In an open letter addressed to the chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Rosa DeLauro, and signed by 328 lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans called for the full funding the \$3.8 billion in annual

security assistance to Israel that was authorised in 2016 as part of a 10-year memorandum of understanding between then-President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The move comes amid efforts by progressive Democrats to seek Israeli accountability for the treatment of Palestinians, including the detention of Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank. The letter said that with aid being necessary for Israel to defend itself from “persistent threats,” “reducing funding or adding conditions on security assistance would be detrimental to Israel’s ability to defend itself against all threats.”

The letter also claimed that Israel provides the U.S. with “unique intelligence information and advanced defensive weapons systems.” It added that U.S. aid to Israel will supposedly help promote regional stability and address common challenges from Iran and its proxies in the Middle East.

“Our aid to Israel is a vital and cost-effective expenditure which advances important US national security interests in a highly challenging region,” the lawmakers from the Republican and Democratic parties wrote.

“For decades, Presidents of both parties have understood the strategic importance of providing Israel with security assistance,” they continued. The statement was led by Michael McCaul, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Ted Deutch, the Democratic chair of the subcommittee on the Middle East.

While McCaul and Deutch acknowledged that some decisions made by the Israeli government might be problematic, they highlighted President Joe Biden’s commitment to providing security assistance without conditions.

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