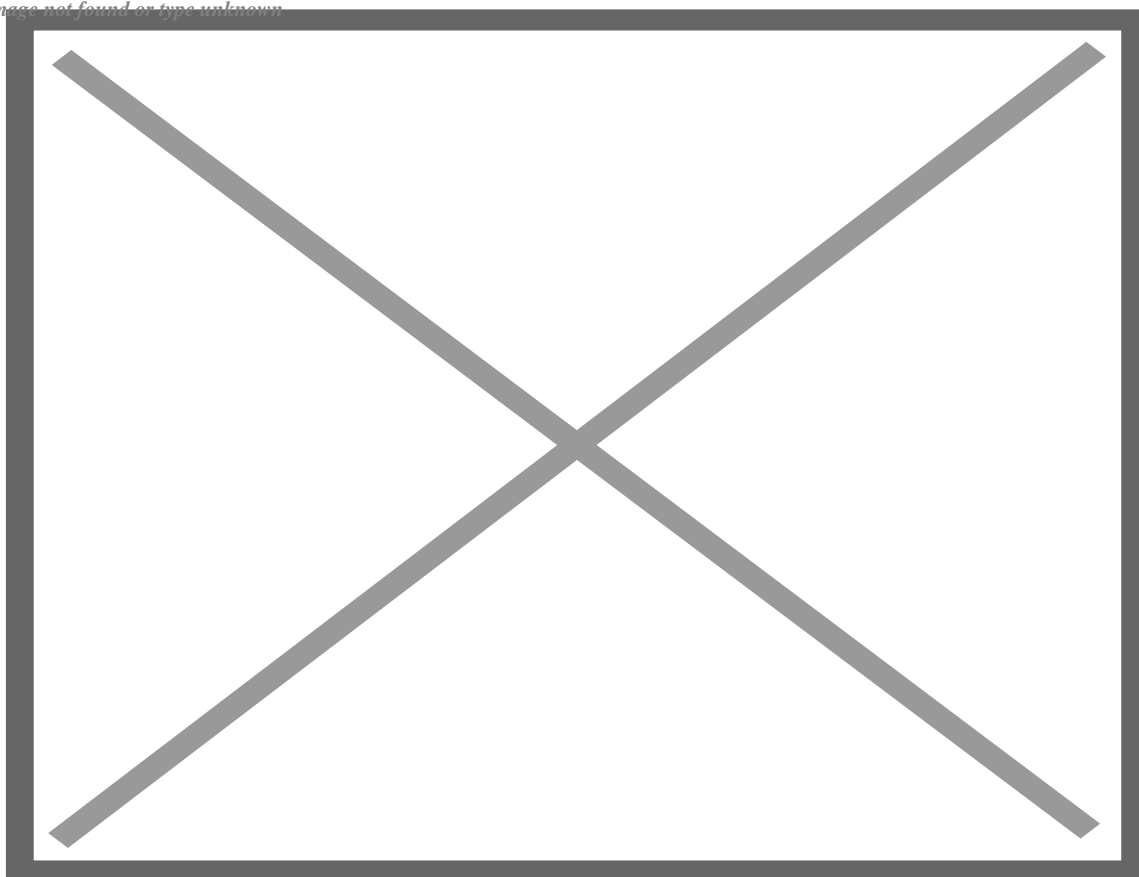


U.S. President Joe Biden arrives in Tel Aviv and hugs Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu

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Tel Aviv, October 18 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden arrived in Israel on Wednesday to meet with Israeli officials, having decided to go ahead with this trip following the massacre at a Gaza hospital, for which Israel denies responsibility.

At the start of his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Biden has backed Israel's accusations. "Based on what I've seen it looks like it was the other side, but there are a lot of people out there who aren't sure," he said.

The presidential plane Air Force One landed at about 10:55 a.m. (07:55 local time) in Tel Aviv, where Biden was greeted by Netanyahu and the president, Isaac Herzog, with hugs. The U.S. president said that the reason why he wanted to be here today, in Israel, is because he wants "people in the world to know who the U.S. stands by."

Biden recalled the visits of Secretary of State Antony Blinken in recent days to Israel, but remarked that he wanted to come "personally" and make it clear that "the terrorist group Hamas has massacred, as has been pointed out, some 1,300 people, and it is not hyperbolic to say massacred, massacred, including 31 Americans, they have dozens of people kidnapped, including minors."

"Americans are mourning with you, they really are, and they are concerned because this not an easy situation to navigate, they have to. The fact is that Israel when it comes to responding to these attacks, it seems to me that we have to continue to ensure that they have what they need to defend themselves," he stressed.

For his part, Netanyahu thanked the U.S. president for his visit and said that this shows "his deep commitment to Israel, to the future of the Jewish people and to the Jewish state." The Israeli ruler also expressed his gratitude for Biden's statements of support in the conflict against the Islamist group Hamas and stressed that "just as the civilized world united to defeat the Nazis and united to defeat the Islamic State, it should unite to defeat Hamas."

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