

White House affirms there is no change in U.S. military support for Israel despite Rafah carnage

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Washington, May 29 (RHC)-- In yet another brazen act of support for Israel's months-long genocide against the besieged Gaza Strip, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has firmly stated that the regime's deadly strikes targeting displaced Palestinians in the southern city of Rafah did not cross a "red line" and would not lead to a change in Washington's policy towards Tel Aviv.

In press briefings on Tuesday, multiple administration officials described the Israeli massacre in Rafah as "heartbreaking" but claimed that the assault, which left dozens of Palestinians dead, was an airstrike and not a major ground operation.

"We still don't believe that a major ground operation in Rafah is warranted. We still don't want to see the Israelis, as we say, smash into Rafah with large units over large pieces of territory. We still believe that, and we haven't seen that at this point," White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters.

"As a result of this strike on Sunday, I have no policy changes to speak to," Kirby added. "It just happened. The Israelis are going to investigate it. We're going to be taking great interest in what they find in that investigation. And we'll see where it goes from there."

The White House spokesperson said that “no civilian casualties is the right number of civilian casualties,” but he acknowledged innocent people are often killed in war.

“There’s not like a measuring stick here or a quota,” he said, when asked if there were a number of civilian deaths that would prompt action from the US. “As we’ve said many times, the right number of civilian casualties is zero.”

Despite providing Israel with untrammelled support over the past eight months, the White House claims to have urged Israel against sending forces into Rafah without a clear plan to evacuate civilians safely.

In another presser on Tuesday, a Pentagon official said Sunday’s airstrike, which was the deadliest incident in Rafah since Israel launched an offensive there, did not amount to what the White House has warned against.

“It is still our assessment that what is happening in Rafah and what the [Israeli military] are doing, it is limited in scope.” Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh told reporters.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan last week told reporters there was “no mathematical formula” for assessing Israel’s conduct in Rafah, but officials would look at “whether there is a lot of death and destruction from this operation or if it is more precise and proportional.”

Israel’s three-week-old Rafah offensive stirred renewed outrage after an airstrike on Sunday set ablaze a tent camp in the west of the city.

Some 50 people, including many children, were killed in Israel’s attack on the tent camp in Rafah late, prompting global condemnations and calls for the implementation of a World Court order to halt Israel’s assault on Gaza.

The attack came two days after the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to stop its US-backed aggression on Gaza that has killed more than 36,000 people since it started in October last year.

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