

As Atrocities Mount in Gaza, US Approves Israeli Request for More Bombs

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Smoke from the explosion of an Israeli strike rise over Gaza City on 29 July. ([Ashraf Amra](#) / [APA images](#))

Hours after Israel shelled yet another UN school sheltering internally displaced families and a marketplace in Gaza, [killing dozens of people](#), an unnamed defense department official [revealed to CNN](#) that the US had approved an Israeli request to tap into the [one billion dollar weapons stockpile](#) the US keeps in Israel.

The last time Israel dipped into the special stockpile was in [2006](#), during its assault on Lebanon.

Pentagon press secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby confirmed to the The Electronic Intifada over email that the US Department of Defense authorized a transfer of munitions to Israel on 23 July in response to a request from the Israeli defense ministry for “a normal Foreign Military Sales delivery of ammunition.”

Two of the munitions Israel demanded—120mm mortar rounds and 40mm grenades—happened to be available in the stockpile, so the US delivered them to the Israeli army from there.

“Issuing munitions from the War Reserve Stockpile Ammunition-Israel (WRSA-I) was strictly a sourcing decision,” explained Kirby.

Arming Israel to stop violence?

Israel’s call for more arms was fulfilled on the sixteenth day of Israel’s assault on the besieged Gaza Strip. By then Israel had already killed at least [661 Palestinians](#), including 132 children.

Asked whether the defense department — the Pentagon — is concerned that its weapons might be used to harm innocent Palestinians given that the overwhelmingly majority of those killed in Gaza have been civilians, Kirby replied that the US is troubled by civilian casualties and is actively pushing for a ceasefire.

“We have consistently voiced our concerns over the rising number of civilian casualties in this conflict. We need to bring the violence and civilian casualties to an end, which is why

the US government is focused on instituting an immediate, unconditional humanitarian ceasefire that ends hostilities now and leads to a permanent cessation of hostilities based on the November 2012 ceasefire agreement,” said Kirby, adding, “We are also concerned that continued fighting could further destabilize the West Bank.”

The spokesman also issued an unprompted reaffirmation of support for “Israel’s right to defend itself,” and praised the Israeli army’s supposed moral superiority, saying “Unlike Hamas, which is firing rockets from populated areas and indiscriminately targeting civilians in Israel, the IDF [Israeli army] takes measures to limit civilian casualties.”

Kirby continued: “But the fact is, despite Israel’s efforts, the Palestinian civilian suffering in Gaza — including the deaths and injuries of children — is great and growing every day.”

“The high civilian death toll makes clear that Israel can and must do more to meet its own high standards for protecting civilians from being killed. This underscores the urgency of getting an unconditional, immediate humanitarian cease-fire.”

“High standards”

Today Israel has killed over [1,300 Palestinians](#) in Gaza since 7 July, including [more than 300 children](#). Almost [80 percent](#) of those killed have been civilians.

In stark contrast, actions by armed Palestinian resistance groups, mainly Hamas, killed [56 soldiers and three Israeli civilians](#), one of whom was a West Bank settler [killed while voluntarily delivering treats](#) to Israeli soldiers stationed at the Gaza border prior to the ground invasion.

Hamas rockets, which do little damage, lack precision guidance systems and are therefore indiscriminate by default, although Hamas has said on occasion that rockets it has fired were intended for military targets.

Conversely, Israel, with a high-powered US-financed precision-guided arsenal at its disposal, has [deliberately bombed civilian targets](#) including private homes, hospitals and mosques, as well as schools, UN shelters, playgrounds, ambulances, media buildings, water treatment facilities and Gaza’s only power plant.

Based on the evidence, it seems Israel’s “high standards for protecting civilians” are no match for the ethical calculations of the side being demonized as “terrorists.”

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