

Congress must hold Israel Accountable for violating US law

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)
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8th July 2006

Dear (Senator Dole, Senator Burr & Congressman Miller,)

Two days ago, a highly respected British organization, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JFJFP), ran a full page advertisement in the *Times* of London, starkly asking, "WHAT IS ISRAEL DOING?" The JFJFP advertisement is direct evidence that the actions of the government of Israel to punish the Palestinian people collectively is not supported by a substantial proportion of the Jewish community. Accordingly, 300 of Europe's most prominent Jewish intellectuals signed the JFJFP advertisement.

JFJFP stated, " We watch with horror the collective punishment of the people of Gaza. Everything reasonable must be done to secure Corporal Gilad Shalit's safe release, but nothing Israel is doing contributes to that aim. Instead, it is using its enormously superior military might to terrorise an entire people."

As members of the US Congress, you will surely know the origin of many of the weapons used by Israel in the systematic killings of civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza. As you well know, Israel is using weapons provided by the United States to target Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip in flagrant violation of the U.S. Arms Export Control Act and the Geneva Conventions. I respectfully request that you use the powers of your good office to hold Israel accountable for violating U.S. law by cutting off military aid to Israel as required by law.

Israeli air force fighter squadrons are composed of Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcons and Boeing F-15's, which fire U.S.-manufactured AMRAAM, Sidewinder, and Sparrow missiles. In the past two years, the United States licensed to Israel at least \$1.062 billion of spare parts, engines, and missiles for its F-15 and F-16 fighter planes. (1)

Israel's month of killing civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, highlighted below, is a clear reminder that Israel remains the occupying power of the Gaza Strip despite last year's "unilateral disengagement."

Living under military occupation, the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip are "protected persons" under the terms of the Geneva Conventions. Israel's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip are a violation of the Geneva Conventions. These Israeli attacks against civilian targets constitute war crimes.

In addition, by using US-supplied weapons to commit these atrocities, Israel is violating the terms of the U.S. Arms Export Control Act and Foreign Assistance Act. The Arms Export Control Act restricts the use of U.S. weapons to legitimate self-defense and internal policing. From a legal standpoint, U.S. weapons cannot be used to attack civilians in offensive operations. The Foreign Assistance Act prohibits U.S. aid of any kind to a country with a pattern of gross human rights violations - yet Israel has received more US aid than any other nation on our planet.

* On June 9th, Israel shelled a beach in Beit Lahiya killing 8 civilians and injuring 32. At the site of the killing, Human Rights Watch found evidence of a 155mm artillery shell consistent with those fired from an Israeli M-109 Self-Propelled Artillery. Between 2000-2005, the United States licensed to Israel \$69,163 worth of M-109 spare parts and 155mm artillery shells. (1)

* On June 13th, Israeli aircraft fired missiles at a van in an extrajudicial killing of two Palestinians in Gaza City. A second barrage of missiles fired shortly afterward killed nine Palestinian bystanders.

* On June 20th, Israeli aircraft fired at least one missile at a car in another attempted extrajudicial killing on a road between Jabalya and Gaza City. The missile missed its intended target and killed three Palestinian children and wounded 15 - a flagrant atrocity.

* On June 27th, Israel launched a massive invasion of the Gaza Strip. Israeli aircraft fired missiles targeting civilian infrastructure. In illegal acts of collective punishment, Israel demolished three key bridges, the Gaza Strip's only electricity generation plant, the five-story Interior Ministry building in Gaza City and part of a university and a school, thereby endangering Palestinian human rights to food, water, health, electricity, education, and freedom of movement. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert openly admitted that the purpose of these measures is to "apply pressure" to the civilian population of the Gaza Strip.

* On June 29th, Israel arrested and detained 64 Palestinian Authority cabinet ministers and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert reportedly said in a closed meeting, "They want prisoners released? We'll release these detainees in exchange for Shalit." The arrested Hamas government officials were democratically elected to govern the Palestinian territories in January, and their arrest and targeting can be considered a reprisal against civilians, which is strictly forbidden under the Geneva Conventions.

I respectfully submit that - in the commission of these flagrant violations of US and international law - Israel is now acting as a rogue state engaged in the perpetration of state-sponsored terror against an occupied people who are living under its protective authority and totally reliant on it for their security. These criminal acts are unfolding in direct and systematic violation of their human rights.

Therefore, appropriate action should be taken by Congress as promptly as possible.

Thank you for your assistance with this request to hold the state of Israel accountable for egregious violations of US law.

Sincerely,

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(1) Statistics for U.S. weapons licensed to Israel are compiled from the State Department's annual report to Congress pursuant to Sec. 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act.

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