

EU Foreign Policy Chief to World Leaders: ‘Stop Saying Please’ and Cut Off Arms to Israel

By [Jake Johnson](#)

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The European Union’s top foreign policy official said Monday that the Biden administration and other governments professing concern about the grisly death toll in the [Gaza Strip](#) should stop supplying so much weaponry to the Israeli military as it carries out [one of the most devastating](#) bombing campaigns in modern history.

Pointing to U.S. President Joe Biden’s [statement](#) late last week that Israel’s war on Gaza has been “over the top,” E.U. High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said during a press conference in Brussels,

“Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms in order to prevent so many people being killed.”

Borrell then extended that suggestion to the rest of the international community, saying if governments believe that “this is a slaughter, that too many people are being killed, maybe they have to think about the provision of arms.”

“Everybody goes to Tel Aviv, begging, ‘Please don’t do that, protect civilians, don’t kill so many.’ How many is too many?” Borrell asked. “It is a little bit contradictory to continue saying that there are ‘too many people being killed, too many people being killed, please take care of people, please don’t kill so many.’ Stop saying please and [do] something.”

Watch:

Update: EU's Borrell on US+Israel:

"If you believe too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide

less arms"
"Everybody goes to Tel Aviv begging"
"Netanyahu doesn't listen to anyone. They're going to evacuate. Where? To the moon?"
"Stop saying please & do something!" pic.twitter.com/g8uiprUia2

— Rosie Birchard (@RosieBirchard) [February 12, 2024](#)

Shortly following Borrell's remarks, veteran *Associated Press* reporter Matt Lee grilled U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller on what leverage the Biden administration has used thus far to pressure the Israeli government to protect civilians in Gaza.

Lee challenged Miller by saying that top U.S. officials, including Biden, standing up and "wagging [their] finger" at Israel was "not really leverage."

Miller responded by citing "the words of the president of the United States" and other diplomatic engagement—a reply that exemplified the approach Borrell urged nations to abandon.

Watch:

AP's Matt Lee: What leverage is US using?

State Dept spox Matt Miller: "The words of the President...matter"

Lee: "Over the top?' That's leverage?"

(2 days after Biden called Israel's behavior "over the top," it attacked the last refuge for 1.5 million Palestinians—killing 90+) pic.twitter.com/pEOKbQICsb

— Prem Thakker (@prem_thakker) [February 12, 2024](#)

The U.S. is by far the largest supplier of arms to Israel, but other countries—including the [United Kingdom](#), [Canada](#), [Germany](#), and the Netherlands—have provided the country with weapons and other military equipment deployed during its ongoing assault on Gaza.

On Monday, a Netherlands court [ordered](#) the Dutch government to stop exporting F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel, citing the "clear risk" that the warplanes "might be used in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law." The government said it would appeal the ruling to the nation's Supreme Court.

Borrell's call for restrictions on weapons transfers to Israel came weeks after a coalition of leading humanitarian organizations urged all countries to impose an [arms embargo](#) on Israel and Palestinian militants, declaring that "all states have the obligation to prevent atrocity crimes and promote adherence to norms that protect civilians."

The U.S. Senate over the weekend advanced legislation that would provide Israel with over \$10 billion in military assistance on top of what the Biden administration [has already provided](#) since the Hamas-led attack on October 7. U.S. Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) was the lone member of the upper chamber's Democratic caucus to vote against advancing the bill.

In the E.U., the foreign ministers of 16 countries received a [letter](#) from human rights groups on Monday urging them to do everything in their power to ensure Israel complies with the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) [interim order](#), which requires Israel to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza.

“Furthermore,” the letter reads, “the E.U. and its member states must call for a cease-fire to ensure that no genocidal acts might be committed by the state of Israel and ensure that they do not cooperate on potential genocidal acts by suspending arms trade with Israel.”

Pressure on governments to stop providing arms to the Israeli military is growing as the Netanyahu government prepares for an invasion of Rafah, a small Gaza city to which more than a million displaced Palestinians fled in an attempt to find refuge from incessant Israeli airstrikes.

During Monday's press conference in Brussels, Borrell criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's [plan](#) to forcibly “evacuate” Rafah's civilian population.

“They are going to evacuate. Where, to the moon?” he asked. “Where are they going to evacuate these people?”

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