

Upcoming Joint Resolutions of Disapproval and Civilian Harm Risks from Related Arms Sales to Israel

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Background

In the last eleven months, the Israeli military has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians through a campaign that even President Biden has called “[indiscriminate](#).” Thousands more are dying from starvation and disease caused by Israeli government restrictions on humanitarian aid and attacks on vital medical, water, and sanitation infrastructure.

The United States has provided or financed tens of thousands of lethal weapons used in this military campaign – from air-to-ground munitions to tank and mortar shells. In light of these consistent violations of international and U.S. law and policy – including the Foreign Assistance Act, the Arms Export Control Act, the Conventional Arm Transfer Policy, and National Security Memorandum 20 – the Biden administration must suspend arms transfers. Yet the administration has neglected to do so at several key moments. As ProPublica reporting recently revealed, Secretary of State Blinken [rejected](#) assessments from both USAID and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration within State that the Israeli government was in violation Section 620I of the FAA; instead, he chose to inform Congress in May that the Israeli government was not then “prohibiting or otherwise restricting the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance.”

If the Biden administration fails to uphold the law, thereby ensuring the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians, then Congress must, by disapproving the sales of lethal weapons to the Israeli government.

Major Arms Sales Notified to Congress and Corresponding Joint Resolutions of Disapproval

- In mid-August, the Biden administration submitted notification to Congress of six major arms sales to Israel. Their cumulative value exceeds \$20 billion.
- These sales have been in the pipeline for several months. In April 2024, Chairman Meeks [placed](#) a hold on the transfer of F-15s and JDAMs to Israel citing concerns about civilian casualties and Israeli restrictions on humanitarian aid. He [lifted](#) the hold in June 2024. In May 2024, the Biden administration [began](#) processing the sale of tank ammunition, tactical vehicles, and mortar rounds.
- On September 25, Senator Sanders introduced joint resolutions of disapproval to suspend six specific arms transfers to Israel. Using the Senate’s privileged procedures, he can put one or more of those resolutions to a vote when the Senate returns to session in November.

[120mm Tank Cartridges](#) – \$774.1 million – [S.J.Res.111](#)

- Tank cartridges are ammunition fired from the gun of Israel’s Merkava-series tank. The shells in this sale contain high explosive payloads.
- When explosive weapons like high-explosive tank shells are used in populated areas, more than 90% of victims [are](#) civilians. Gaza is one of the world’s most densely populated areas.
- Israeli forces have used 120mm tank shells in attacks that have killed journalists and children.
 - On October 13 2023, Israeli forces [attacked several](#) journalists with 120mm tank ammunition in southern Lebanon, killing *Reuters*’ Issam Abdallah. American journalist Dylan Collins [was](#) among those wounded in the attack.
 - On January 29, 2024, Israeli forces [used](#) US 120mm tank ammunition in Gaza City in an attack that killed seven members of the Hamada family, including six-year-old Hind Rajab and 15 year-old Layan. Two paramedics named Yousef Zeino and Ahmed al-Madhoun were killed while

- responding to their distress call. The family was trying to evacuate to receive medical care for Hind Rajab after the IDF posted a call to evacuate on X.
- In February 20, Israeli tanks [fired](#) upon a Medecins Sans Frontieres guesthouse in Khan Younis, killing two people — the wife and daughter of a staff member— and injuring six others. Five of those six injured were women and children.
 - On May 28, the Israeli military [used](#) 120mm tank rounds in al-Mawasi in an attack that killed 23 people, including 12 children and 7 women.

Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) – \$262 million – [S.J.Res.115](#)

SABR M-Code GPS Receiver – [S.J.Res.116](#)

- JDAMs are kits attached to air-dropped bombs to guide them to their target. JDAMs can be attached to 2000-, 1000-, or 500-pound bombs. JDAM receivers process GPS signals to direct JDAMs.
- Israeli forces have regularly used U.S.-made JDAMs in attacks that have killed and harmed civilians. Many of the attacks appear to have violated international law.
 - On October 10, 2023, an Israeli strike with a U.S. JDAM in Deir al-Balah [killed](#) 24, including 7 children. Survivor Suleiman Salman al-Najjar had just returned from receiving treatment for kidney problems when he [learned](#) his wife and children were killed.
 - On October 22, 2023, an Israeli strike with a U.S. JDAM in Deir al-Balah [killed](#) 19, including 12 children. Survivor Samaher Abu Mu'eileq had just left the home of his brother, sister-in-law, and nephews and nieces when their house was [bombed](#).
 - On October 31, 2023, an Israeli strike with U.S. JDAMs in Jabalia [killed](#) at least 126 civilians, including 69 children. At least one survivor lost his entire family, and another survivor lost all his children. The bomb left a 40-foot crater and destroyed 20 residential buildings.
 - On January 18, 2024, an Israeli strike with a U.S. JDAM in al-Mawasi [targeted](#) a humanitarian facility. Coordinates had been shared with the Israeli military as part of the UN deconfliction program. The injured medical team had to evacuate from Nasser hospital.
 - On March 27, 2024, an Israeli strike with a U.S. JDAM in al-Habariyeh, Lebanon [killed](#) 7 healthcare workers, all of whom were university volunteers who joined the ambulance corps after the war started.
 - On July 13, 2024, an Israeli strike with a U.S. JDAM in al-Mawasi [killed](#) at least 90 Palestinians – at least half of whom were women and children – and injured at least 300.
- When attached to general purpose bombs, JDAMs help the bombs reach their targets with increased precision and accuracy. While proponents of JDAMs and similar technology tout their use in mitigating civilian harm, that is entirely dependent on target selection practices. In Gaza, Israeli forces have frequently used precision weapons to precisely strike civilians and civilian objects.

[M933A1 120mm High Explosive Mortar Cartridges](#) – \$61.1 million – [S.J.Res.113](#)

- Mortar cartridges are ammunition for a short-range, lightweight cannon. The shells in this sale contain high explosive payloads.
- When explosive weapons like high-explosive mortar shells are used in populated areas, more than 90% of victims [are](#) civilians. Gaza is one of the world's most densely populated areas.

[M1148A1P2 Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles](#) – \$583.1 million – [S.J.Res.112](#)

- Medium tactical vehicles are military-grade trucks. This sale includes supplies to armor the vehicles.
- Israeli forces have used tactical vehicles to kill, maim, and abuse Palestinians.
 - On August 8, 2024, Israeli forces [killed](#) a 15-year-old Palestinian boy in Jenin, West Bank by driving a military vehicle over his abdomen. After Khatab had been [injured](#) in an airstrike, an ambulance

attempted to reach him but Israeli soldiers in the military vehicle fired live ammunition toward the paramedics.

- On June 24, 2024, Israeli forces [tied](#) an injured Palestinian to the hood of a military vehicle during a raid witnessed by his wife and child in Jenin, West Bank. They had requested an ambulance for the injury he incurred during the raid, upon which soldiers strapped him to the vehicle, appearing to use them as a human shield. A State Department spokesperson called the act “shocking” and “absolutely unacceptable.”

F-15IA and F-15I+ Aircraft – \$18.82 billion – S.J.Res.114

- F-15IA and F-15I+ are models of fighter aircraft. They can be equipped with both air-to-air weapons and air-to-ground weapons.
- The Israeli military relies heavily on U.S.-made warplanes to conduct air-to-ground strikes. The Israeli military [has used F-15s already in its](#) fleet for airstrikes in Gaza. Documenting the use of planes in specific attacks is much more difficult than doing so for munitions because planes do not leave remnants that can be collected or photographed. However, it is likely that many Israeli bombings that have killed civilians have involved F-15s.
- The notified F-15s would not be delivered to Israel until 2029, calling the urgency of this sale into question. The Biden administration should not have announced, and Congress should not accept, diplomatically costly weapons sales at a politically sensitive moment – especially when they could have been withheld to leverage desperately needed shifts in Israeli government policy.