

My name is Josh Paul. I resigned from my position as a director in the US State Department's Bureau of Political Military Affairs last October in opposition to America's policy of providing lethal arms to Israel in the context of its current war on Gaza.

The US is by far the major supplier of arms to Israel, providing via grant and sale and through both government-to-government and commercial channels many billions of dollars worth of arms, including lethal arms which have been used in the current Israeli war against Gaza and including over 100 foreign military sales cases in the past four months alone. The United States government has actual knowledge that these arms will be and are being used to commit human rights violations both in the West Bank in terms of firearms provided to units credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights and in Gaza in terms of both firearms which have been used to conduct extrajudicial killings and in terms of air-to-ground munitions, artillery rounds and tank shells, which have been used, in the very words of President Biden, to conduct, quote, indiscriminate bombing, unquote. I can say with confidence that the United States has actual knowledge that its arms will be used to commit such violations, as I have been a part of U.S. internal government debates about such violations for many years, and myself raised these specific concerns after the start of Israel's attack on Gaza prior to my resignation last October. As such, the US is in violation of its own policies and laws, including the conventional arms transfer policy that I helped to draft and which was intentionally informed by the Arms Trade Treaty that expressly prohibits the transfer of arms when it is more likely than not that they will be used to commit certain human rights violations.

The Leahy laws, which prohibit military assistance to units credibly alleged of gross violations of human rights. Other relevant laws, including those which prohibit military assistance to a country restricting or obstructing the delivery of US-funded humanitarian assistance, and the US obligations as a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty. And nor, I should note, is the United States holding Israel to account for violations of Israel's own commitments to the United States through the Foreign Military Sales Agreements regarding its obligations under international humanitarian law. In fact, the US does not even have a mechanism for doing so within the standard foreign military sales process. I therefore make three calls. First, I call upon the United States to uphold its responsibilities as a signatory to, pending ratification of, the Arms Trade Treaty, not to undermine the purposes of the treaty, and therefore to suspend lethal arms transfers to Israel that may be used by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Second, I call on the US Defense Industrial Base, to recognize their potential criminal liability in the provision of arms where a clear risk of violation of international law exists on the part of the end user and to take appropriate steps to remove themselves from this complicity. Third, having worked in the arms transfer sector for over a decade, I'm particularly cognizant that many states parties are second and third tier suppliers to the United States and to its defense industrial base of parts and components for weapons systems which are transferred from the U.S. to Israel. While I believe in the importance of a strong U.S. self-defense capability and am grateful for the continuing armaments cooperation between the U.S. and its allies and partners when it comes to the systems that enable our own legitimate collective defense, I call upon states parties to examine those supply chains for parts and components that are being integrated into lethal weapon systems that are being provided by the United States to Israel and to take appropriate action to restrict their transfer both directly to Israel and via incorporation into relevant US primary systems that are delivered to Israel, as is required by the Arms Trade Treaty.

Thank you.