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زبانهای اروپایی

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11.04.2024

Aid into Gaza is Long Overdue, Now End the Weapons Sales



U.S. Air Force loadmasters watch as humanitarian aid drops over Gaza. Photograph Source: Staff Sgt. Christian Sullivan – Public Domain.

The United Nations has reported that 28 children have died of malnutrition and dehydration in Gaza thus far. The real total is likely much higher. More than one million people in Gaza face “catastrophic food insecurity,” and more than 50,000 children are acutely malnourished. In other words, the people of Gaza are starving. Without a dramatic influx of food, water, and medicine, many thousands more innocent men, women, and children will perish. This is morally unacceptable and must end NOW.

As a result of President Biden’s conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu last week, Israel has committed to a number of steps to improve humanitarian conditions and aid access.

These commitments include opening additional border crossings, increasing the number of trucks cleared for entry into Gaza, improving aid distribution within Gaza, and reopening some bakeries and a water pipeline to supply northern Gaza. President Biden made clear that “U.S. policy with respect to Gaza will be determined by our assessment of Israel’s immediate action on these steps.

On Sunday, more than 300 trucks were cleared to cross into Gaza, the highest total since the war began, though still short of the 500 trucks per day that humanitarian organizations say are needed. Israel says aid will begin to flow through new crossings in the north later this week.

These are welcome if long-overdue steps. But, given Israel’s horrendous humanitarian record thus far, these commitments must be closely monitored on a daily basis. This is an urgent crisis. Food, water, and medical supplies must immediately reach people in desperate need throughout Gaza. The United States government must demand daily updates on implementation of these steps.

A significant majority of the American people now believe that Israel should not receive additional U.S. military aid while this horrific humanitarian crisis endures. I agree. The United States must focus on saving innocent Palestinian people and advancing steps that can secure a lasting peace, not sending Netanyahu’s extreme, right-wing government more money or weapons. The United States cannot be complicit in the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

Bernie Sanders is a US Senator, and the ranking member of the Senate budget committee. He represents the state of Vermont, and is the longest-serving independent in the history of Congress.

APRIL 10, 2024