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The shelling of the U.N. school killed at least 20 people, many of them children who were sleeping. Just hours later, the Pentagon confirmed it was resupplying Israel with ammunition. The United States has come under increasing pressure from the international community to curb its military support for Israel. Amnesty International has called on the Obama administration to halt its arms deliveries. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay criticized the U.S. role.

**Navi Pillay:** "They have not only provided the heavy weaponry, which is now being used by Israel in Gaza, but they've also provided almost \$1 billion in providing the Iron Domes to protect Israelis from the rocket attacks, but no such protection has been provided to Gazans against the shelling. So I am reminding the United States that it's a party to international humanitarian law and human rights law."

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[For further information on U.S. military weapons supplied to Israel for attack on Gaza, see this excellent article by Ken Klippenstein and Paul Gottinger.](#)

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### **Amnesty International: U.S. Should Stop Arming Israel Amid "Growing Evidence of War Crimes in Gaza"**

On the same day Israeli forces killed 20 Palestinians at a U.N. school this week, the U.S. confirmed it had provided Israel with fresh supplies of munitions, including mortar rounds for tanks and ammo for grenade launchers. Now, one of the nation's leading human rights organizations has called on the United States to stop arms transfers to Israel amid "growing evidence of war crimes in Gaza." On Thursday, Amnesty International said the U.S. government must immediately end its ongoing deliveries of large quantities of arms to Israel, which are providing the tools to commit further serious violations of international law in Gaza. Amnesty's call comes as the United Nations' top human rights official has also criticized the

United States. "They have not only provided the heavy weaponry which is now being used by Israel in Gaza, but they've also provided almost \$1 billion in providing the Iron Domes to protect Israelis from the rockets attacks, but no such protection has been provided to Gazans against the shelling," said Navi Pillay, U.N. human rights high commissioner. "So I am reminding United States that it's a party to international humanitarian law and human rights law." The United States is the largest exporter of military equipment to Israel, by far. According to data made public by the U.S. government, its arms transfers to Israel from January to May 2014 included nearly \$27 million for "rocket launchers," \$9.3 million worth in "parts of guided missiles" and nearly \$762,000 for "bombs, grenades and munitions of war." We speak to Sunjeev Bery, director of Middle East/North Africa advocacy at Amnesty International USA.

*Image Credit: Amnesty International*

**AMY GOODMAN:** This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman, with Aaron Maté. We've been showing the photos of celebrities, of artists, of writers, in a project called Freedom for Palestine, people like Gloria Steinem and hip-hop legend Chuck D and playwright Wally Shawn, as well as the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner, Eve Ensler and others, Jonathan Demme, holding the names of the dead in the Palestine conflict. Aaron?

**AARON MATÉ:** As we turn now to our next segment, on the same day Israeli forces killed 20 Palestinians at a U.N. school this week, the U.S. confirmed it provided Israel with fresh supplies of munitions, including mortar rounds for tanks and ammo for grenade launchers. Now, one of the nation's leading human rights organizations is calling on the U.S. to stop arms transfers to Israel amid what it called, quote, "growing evidence of war crimes in Gaza." On Thursday, Amnesty International said the U.S. government must immediately end its ongoing deliveries of large quantities of arms to Israel, saying they are providing the tools to commit further and serious violations of international law.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The United States is the largest exporter of military equipment to Israel, by far. According to data made public by the U.S. government, its arms transfers to Israel from January to May in 2014 included nearly \$27 million for rocket launchers, \$9.3 million worth in parts of guided missiles, \$762,000 for bombs, grenades and munitions of war.

Well, for more, we stay in Washington, D.C., with Sunjeev Bery, director of Middle East/North Africa advocacy at Amnesty International.

Sunjeev, welcome to *Democracy Now!* Can you talk about the statement Amnesty has just issued on this latest news of the U.S. resupply of ammunition for Israel as it runs low in the attack on Gaza?

**SUNJEEV BERY:** Absolutely, Amy. Thank you for having me on the show. Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the continuing shipments of weapons and arms by the U.S. government to the Israeli military. On the one hand, you have U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry talking about ceasefire proposals; on the other hand, the United States is allowing the Israeli military to restock on some of the very types of arms and weapons that it has used in what are likely to be war crimes in its conflict with Hamas and Palestinian armed groups.

**AARON MATÉ:** Well, Sunjeev, on Thursday, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, criticized the U.S. for its role in the Israeli assault on Gaza.

**NAVI PILLAY:** They have not only provided the heavy weaponry, which is now being used by Israel in Gaza, but they've also provided almost \$1 billion in providing the Iron Domes to protect Israelis from the rocket attacks, but no such protection has been provided to Gazans against the shelling. So I am reminding the United States that it's a party to international humanitarian law and human rights law.

**AARON MATÉ:** That's the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay. Sunjeev, the significance here of the U.N.'s top rights official saying the U.S. could be implicated in these violations?

**SUNJEEV BERY:** That's a very important statement for the U.N.'s top human rights official to make, and Amnesty International appreciates this kind of commentary from public international voices. It's high time that there be a U.N. arms embargo imposed on all of the parties to this conflict. And in the meantime, no individual country should be providing any weapons to anybody involved in the fighting, because each of the parties have demonstrated contempt and utter disregard for human rights, whether you're talking about the Israeli military and what are likely to be significant war crimes across the Gaza Strip through its indiscriminate strikes and shelling, whether you're talking about Hamas rockets being fired into Israel that are indiscriminate, or some of the other Palestinian armed groups. It's unconscionable for the U.S. to be supplying more weapons to Israel while simultaneously giving lip service to ceasefire talks.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You're issuing a statement on the International Criminal Court. What is it, today, Sunjeev?

**SUNJEEV BERY:** We are calling for the International Criminal Court to make a determination and to begin investigations into these potential human rights violations and abuses. It's time for the ICC, the International Criminal Court, to weigh in on this matter and to bring to bear its prosecutorial and investigative abilities to bring about international jurisdiction. We also want the U.N. Security Council to make a formal determination to pass a binding resolution that does a number of things, one of which is to refer this matter to the International Criminal Court so that it can begin investigating and potentially prosecuting.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And finally, your response to Israel saying it's fighting terrorists, it needs to be re-armed to continue to do that?

**SUNJEEV BERY:** Israel has repeatedly demonstrated over and over again that it's not going to hold any of its soldiers accountable when they are involved in human rights violations. It's also demonstrated over and over again that it's going to use weapons that it receives in human rights violations both with regards to Gaza as well as the occupied Palestinian territories, including the West Bank. So, for example, in the last three years, leading up to the time prior to the current conflict in Gaza, Amnesty International documented some 8,000 incidents, according to U.N. data, in which Israeli soldiers had injured Palestinian civilians and others in the West Bank, everything from bullets to other things like tear gas and other kinds of ammunition. So we're talking about a human rights crisis here that didn't just start a few weeks ago but has been going on for years.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Sunjeev Bery, I want to thank you for being with us, director of Middle East/North Africa advocacy at Amnesty International USA.