

Senate Democrats overwhelmingly reject restricting US arms sales to Israel

Jacob Crosse
4 April 2025

For the second time in the less than four months, the US Senate has resoundingly voted in support of continuing the genocide in Gaza by rejecting two resolutions aimed at blocking some \$9 billion in weapons to the Israeli government.

S.J. Resolution 33, which failed 15-82, sought to block \$2 billion worth of arms, including 35,000 MK 84 2,000-pound bombs and 4,000 I-2000 Penetrator warheads. The I-2000 Penetrator warhead is used in the AGM-130 (Air to Ground) missile system, intended to destroy bunkers, deeply buried structures and other reinforced targets.

S.J. Resolution 26 sought to block nearly \$7 billion in arms, including thousands of smaller 500-pound bombs and JDAM kits used to turn unguided “dummy” bombs into “precision” munitions. This resolution also garnered only 15 votes in favor, with 83 opposed.

Under conditions where President Donald Trump has promised to “take over” the Gaza Strip and, with the Israeli government, oversee the forced displacement of the remaining 2.1 million residents, a majority of Democratic senators voted against putting minimal restrictions on US arms transfers to Israel. No Republicans voted in favor of either resolution.

New Jersey Democratic Senator Cory Booker, recently hailed in the corporate press for talking for 25 hours straight on the Senate floor—without blocking a vote on legislation or a Trump judicial nomination—voted against both resolutions. A day before the vote, following his self-serving monologue, Booker wrote on X/Twitter, “This is a moral moment. It is not left or right, it is right or wrong.”

Since October 7, 2023, US-supplied weapons and intelligence have facilitated the Israeli government’s ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza and the West Bank, which has killed or injured some 175,000 people. For

the past 33 days, the Israeli military has blocked food, medicine and electricity from entering Gaza, one of innumerable war crimes committed by America’s attack dog.

Following Israel’s resumption of hostilities last month after unilaterally ending the “ceasefire,” over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed, including over 300 children in the last week. On Thursday, the same day the Senate rejected the resolutions, Israel launched multiple strikes targeting schools sheltering displaced families in Gaza City. According to the Gaza Government Media Office, the strikes killed at least 33 children and injured over 100 additional people.

The Israeli military has resumed the forced displacement of the population within Gaza. In the last week, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that the Israeli military has declared nearly two-thirds of Gaza off-limits to civilians as part of its resumption of military operations throughout the enclave.

Thursday’s resolutions, led by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, had no chance of passing in either the Republican-controlled Senate or House. Even if they did pass, Trump, like Joe Biden before him, would veto them. Like the previous resolutions introduced by Sanders last November, these resolutions were not aimed at actually stopping the slaughter, but at covering up the strong bipartisan support for genocide in Washington.

Neither of Thursday’s resolutions garnered more than 15 votes, four less than when similar resolutions were put forward by Sanders in November under the Biden administration. Last year, Georgia Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire) and Independent Maine Senator Angus King voted in favor of blocking the arms. On Thursday,

all four flipped their votes. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, a self-proclaimed “progressive,” voted “present” on the resolutions, as she did last November.

Speaking prior to the Senate vote, Sanders made clear that he supported Israel’s “right to defend itself,” and that the resolutions targeted only so-called “offensive” weapons.

“I trust that every American—and certainly every member of the Senate—understands that Hamas, a terrorist organization, began this terrible war with its barbaric October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which killed 1,200 innocent people and took 250 hostages,” Sanders bellowed.

This narrative, advanced by Israel and the US for the last 17 months, is a lie that has long since been debunked. Sanders is well aware that the Israeli government knew about the attack beforehand and stood down its forces on the Gaza border in order to use the incursion as a pretext for launching the plan for genocide and ethnic cleansing worked out long before by Israel and its US sponsor. The Israel Defense Forces moreover invoked the *Hannibal Directive* during Hamas’ incursion, knowingly increasing the number of Israeli civilian casualties.

In his speech, Sanders, an agent of US imperialism, observed that the US ruling class’ open support for war crimes in Gaza undercuts attempts by Washington to advance “human rights” arguments to justify US interventions and military actions around the world.

“If we condone the barbarism that is taking place in Gaza today, we will have no standing in the world to condemn the horrors and war crimes that other countries may commit,” Sanders said, adding, “You’re not going to be able to look at China or Russia or Saudi Arabia or any other country and say, ‘Look, how terrible, look what they are doing to the children, to the women, innocent people.’”

“We will have no credibility,” he continued, “Because they will come back and say, ‘Really? You are really concerned with what China, Russia and Saudi Arabia might be doing? Hey, take a look at what you supported in Gaza and the billions of dollars in aid you gave to Netanyahu’s government.’”

Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland), one of the 14 Democrats to back Sanders’ resolutions, likewise framed his support as a defense of Israel and US

interests in the region. “This is not about whether someone is pro-Israel,” said Van Hollen.

Like Sanders, he affirmed that “Israel has the right to defend itself.” He added, “In fact, I would argue the duty to defend itself in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas attack of October 7, 2023 that murdered over 1,200 individuals and took over 250 hostages. Hamas is a despicable terrorist organization and there must be no more October 7s.”

A similar shabby maneuver is being undertaken in the House, led by Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan). On Monday, the two Democrats introduced four separate resolutions aimed at blocking “offensive” weapons to Israel. As is the case in the Senate, the Republicans control the House and they, along with a large majority of Democrats, will not vote for the measures.

These diversions are aimed at blocking the development of an independent socialist movement in the working class and sowing illusions in the Democratic Party, which, no less than the Republicans, has supported the Zionist state for over three-quarters of century.

The fight against genocide and war requires a fight against the capitalist system and all those who uphold and defend it.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact