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Netanyahu: Israeli soldiers lost their lives in Gaza due to Biden-era arms embargo

In incendiary allegation, premier says IDF 'didn't have enough ammunition,' but 'embargo' ended when Trump took office; furious Biden aides say claim 'categorically false,' PM 'ungrateful'

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US President Joe Biden is greeted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after arriving at Ben Gurion International Airport, October 18, 2023, in Lod. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted Tuesday that some Israeli soldiers lost their lives in the war against Hamas because of what he called an “embargo,” that allegedly caused Israel to run out of ammunition.

He did not specify how many soldiers lost their lives for this reason, or precisely when it ostensibly happened. The premier did not directly name the

Biden administration, but said that the “embargo” ended as soon as US President Donald Trump took office.

Netanyahu has repeatedly accused the Biden administration of instituting an embargo on arms supplies to Israel, notably in June 2024. Biden has denied withholding arms from Israel, apart from a batch of 2,000-pound “bunker buster” bombs amid concerns about how they would be used in the southern Gaza city of Rafah at that time.

Speaking at the very end of a lengthy press conference, in remarks that were not prompted by a question, Netanyahu said Israel paid “very heavy prices” in the war in terms of the loss of soldiers’ lives. While “part of that is what happens in war,” he said, part of it stemmed from the fact that “at a certain stage, we didn’t have enough ammunition.”

Soldiers at the time were fighting in areas where artillery and air force weaponry had been used, but terrorists had remained in booby-trapped houses, Netanyahu said.

“Heroes fell” because they didn’t have the ammunition they needed, he charged. And “part of that absent ammunition was because of the embargo.”



Friends and family attend the funeral of IDF soldier Sgt. Shlomo Yakir Shrem at the military cemetery in Kfar Etzion, July 15, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Netanyahu said he has resolved that this will never be allowed to happen again, and that is why he is determined to ensure that Israel has its own strong and independent arms industry, repeating his declaration from earlier this month that he hoped to make Israel less dependent on US military aid in the next decade.

To that end, he said, he is aiming to shift the Israel-US relationship “from aid to partnership,” when it comes to weapons, with Israeli development and joint production, and that such a partnership could extend to allies, including India and Germany as well.

Netanyahu said he has prioritized establishing a robust domestic army industry “for maximal independence... so we don’t run out of weapons or ammunition, and in the hope that we won’t have to use them.”

Netanyahu’s accusation is an apparent effort to explain comments he made in an interview with The Economist during which he claimed that Israel lost soldiers in Gaza because of his “refusal” to “carpet bomb” cities before the Israel Defense Forces invaded them on foot.

Critics of the premier pointed out that his Likud party repeatedly blasted political rival and former IDF chief of staff Benny Gantz for making similar comments to foreign press while explaining the Israeli military’s efforts to avoid civilian casualties.

Biden aides: Netanyahu ‘not telling the truth,’ ‘ungrateful’
Amos Hochstein, one of former president Biden’s top aides, said the prime minister was lying.

“Netanyahu is both not telling the truth and ungrateful to a president that literally saved Israel at its most vulnerable moment,” Amos Hochstein told the Axios news site, moments after the prime minister made the claim.

In further remarks on X, Hochstein wrote that “After more than \$20 Billion military support, largest in Israel[i] history, two aircraft carriers rushed to the region, deterring a massive regional war, defeating Iran missile and drone attack twice, defending Israel at most vulnerable moments, after SAVING countless lives of Israelis – only acceptable response to US president Biden and American people is THANK YOU.”



US special envoy Amos Hochstein talks to reporters following his meeting with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri (not pictured) in Beirut on November 20, 2024. (AFP)

Hochstein was joined by fellow top Biden aide Brett McGurk, who told Axios, “That statement by Netanyahu is categorically false.”

“Biden left office with a ceasefire in Gaza and hostages coming home, a ceasefire in Lebanon with Hezbollah defeated, Iran in its weakest position since 1979 after two failed missile attacks thanks to the deployment of US military forces and a coordinated response that destroyed Iran’s air defenses. His commitment to Israel’s security to include US military assistance was unwavering throughout the crisis,” McGurk said of Biden.

Former US ambassador to Israel Tom Nides, who served under Biden, also took issue with Netanyahu’s statement.

“He is wrong. Biden’s support for Israel has been rock solid, and he did it at enormous political cost,” Nides told the Ynet news site.