

Carter backs clergy's call to probe U.S. aid to Israel

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Former president Jimmy Carter commended 15 Christian leaders whose recent call for Congress to investigate human rights violations by Israelis against Palestinians caused tension between Jewish and mainline Protestant denominations in the United States.

The Atlanta-based Carter Center released a statement October 31 sharing the group's concern about Israel's disregard for stated U.S. policy, including repeated demands that Israel halt all settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, according to the Associated Baptist Press.

"This is precluding the possibility of a two-state solution and endangers a peaceful future for both Israelis and Palestinians," said Carter, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who started the not-for-profit Carter Center in 1982.

[Leaders of 15 denominations and organizations wrote members of Congress October 5](#) urging an immediate investigation into possible violations by Israel. U.S. foreign policy denies assistance to countries that engage in a consistent pattern of human rights violations.

Carter's 2007 book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, was widely criticized for comparing Israel's treatment of Palestinians living within its borders to the South African regime that kept that nation racially segregated until the 1980s.

That controversy resurfaced in 2009, when Carter gave a speech calling Israel's then two-year-old blockade of Gaza an "atrocious" and saying people there were treated like animals. Carter later apologized for "words or deeds" that might have served to stigmatize Israel.