

Newest Report From Biden Administration Upholds Trump's Recognition of Israel's Capital

The Biden administration released its first annual human rights report in which it reaffirmed its stance that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and reintroduced pre-Trump era language referring to some territory as “occupied” by Israel.

The annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices examines human rights issues across the globe, including in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Both Biden and Trump reiterated that the US has recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital city since 2017. Like the Trump report, Biden's report did not define the exact boundaries of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Both reports said those boundaries must be determined through negotiations. Biden also reaffirmed Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which the US recognized in 2019.

However, Biden broke away from Trump-era policy by calling eastern Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the West Bank—biblical Judea and Samaria—territory occupied by Israel. The Trump administration did not use the word “occupation” to describe Israel's control over this land. Israel claimed this territory during the 1967 Mideast war, but the international community believes the final legal status of this land should be determined through diplomacy.

Israel rejects that it is occupying territory, instead claiming that the land in question is “disputed.”

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