

# The U.S. special envoy says Israeli strikes on police are hindering the delivery of aid.

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David Satterfield, the United States special envoy for humanitarian assistance in the Israel-Hamas war, pushed back against claims that Hamas diverts aid entering Gaza for its own purposes. Credit...Bilal Hussein/Associated Press

David Satterfield, the U.S. special envoy for humanitarian aid, said on Friday that Israeli military strikes on Palestinian police officers were hindering the delivery of badly needed humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Satterfield said Israeli strikes in recent days had killed several police officials who were escorting United Nations aid convoys in Gaza. It was “virtually impossible,” he said, for the agency and its partners to distribute the aid without the help of the police.

“We’re working with the Israeli government, with the Israeli military, in seeing what solutions can be found here because everyone wants to see the assistance continue,” he said. “No one wants to empower Hamas.”

Mr. Satterfield made the comments during an interview streamed online by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He said his offices were looking into

solutions to more effectively distribute aid from the hundreds of trucks that enter Gaza daily.

Israel has frequently accused Hamas of diverting aid going into Gaza for its own purposes.

Mr. Satterfield pushed back against that claim. He said that there was a Hamas presence among U.N. aid workers, but that Israel had brought forward no evidence to suggest that U.N.-delivered aid had been diverted or stolen.

“No Israeli official has come to me, come to the administration, with specific evidence of diversion or theft of assistance delivered by the U.N.,” he said.

Mr. Satterfield said the officers that escort the U.N. trucks come from two forces: the Palestinian Police, which are part of the Hamas administration in Gaza, and a second force that is part of the Palestinian Authority’s “remnant presence” in the enclave.

Aid groups have repeatedly raised concerns that Israel’s offensive in Gaza has endangered their trucks and have said that only a cease-fire would allow them to distribute aid safely. Israel has denied claims that humanitarian trucks come under its fire.

And as hunger has spread in Gaza, desperate mobs have looted warehouses and have pulled food from trucks. Mr. Satterfield said that “criminal gangs” and “the rising value of humanitarian assistance in the black market” are impeding the distribution of aid.

The Palestinian Police said in a statement on Feb. 6 that six officers had been killed while providing security to aid trucks.

Israel did not respond to a request for comment.

Last month, Israel accused about a dozen employees of the main U.N. agency dedicated to helping Palestinians, known as UNRWA, of involvement in the Hamas-led attacks on Oct. 7 or their aftermath, and accused most of them of being members of Hamas. UNRWA has said that Israel has not presented it with evidence that agency employees were involved.

Dozens of Israeli protesters have also tried to block trucks at the Kerem Shalom crossing, one of two points of entry for aid into Gaza, claiming that the assistance would go into the hands of Hamas.

Top U.N. officials have repeatedly denied the accusations and warned that much more aid needs to enter Gaza to prevent humanitarian catastrophe.