

US sends second aircraft carrier ‘to deter hostile actions against Israel’

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Online Desk: The United States is sending a second aircraft carrier strike group to the eastern Mediterranean “to deter hostile actions against Israel or any efforts toward widening this war following Hamas’s attack,” Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Saturday.

The USS Eisenhower and its affiliated warships will join another carrier group already deployed to the region in the wake of the attack on Israel a week ago and Israel’s ongoing response.

The deployment signals Washington’s “ironclad commitment to Israel’s security and our resolve to deter any state or non-state actor seeking to escalate this war,” Austin said in a statement.

A week of deadly Israeli salvos was sparked by a Hamas raid which saw fighters break through the heavily fortified border between the Gaza Strip and Israel and gun down, stab and burn to death more than 1,300 people.

In Gaza, health officials said Israel’s response had killed more than 2,200 people. As on the Israeli side, most of them were civilians.

The United States has sent munitions to Israel and warned other countries not to escalate the conflict.

The same day as the announcement of the second carrier deployment, President Joe Biden underscored US support for efforts to protect civilians amid the Israeli siege and bombardment of Gaza in a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“President Biden affirmed his support for all efforts to protect civilians,” the White House said in a statement about the call, which did not specifically mention the enclave.

Biden also spoke Saturday with Palestinian Authority leader Mahmud Abbas for the first time since hostilities broke out, condemning “Hamas’ brutal attack on Israel.”

“Hamas does not stand for the Palestinian people’s right to dignity and self-determination,” Biden told Abbas, according to a White House statement about the conversation between the two leaders.