

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Dr. Yechiel Leiter
Ambassador of Israel
3514 International Drive NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Leiter:

As supporters of a strong US-Israel relationship, we write to express our opposition to the current Israeli government policy to block all humanitarian aid from entering the Gaza Strip. We are deeply alarmed and dismayed by this blockade, which started on March 2 and has contributed to some of the worst humanitarian conditions in Gaza since October 2023¹. Such a policy is morally wrong and runs counter to the shared democratic values between our two countries. In addition to the harm imposed on Palestinian civilians, it is strategically counterproductive and will only hurt Israel's international standing and long term security. We condemn Hamas, their horrific attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023, and their refusal to release the remaining hostages from captivity. We also share concerns about Hamas diverting humanitarian assistance, and we encourage your government to work with the United States, alongside humanitarian organizations, to do everything possible to minimize the risk of diverted resources without harming civilians. We urge you to relay to Prime Minister Netanyahu and his cabinet the urgency of resuming the flow of aid immediately.

We are closely monitoring the recent reports of a new plan² supported by the Israeli cabinet to increase the flow of aid. While we welcome efforts to increase humanitarian assistance, we are concerned this plan still severely restricts the flow of aid into Gaza. Any restructuring of the aid delivery system must allow for sufficient aid to the civilian population as defined by international humanitarian best practices, and be both logistically feasible and consistent with international law – all concerns raised by NGOs and UN agencies that operate in Gaza. Deliberation on any new plan must not preclude an urgently needed surge in aid from entering the territory immediately under existing aid distribution systems.

Now nine weeks into the total blockade, the humanitarian conditions in Gaza are staggering, leading to new levels of despair for Palestinian civilians. Food stockpiles from the ceasefire have been largely depleted³, and the World Food Programme has stated that all 25 subsidized bakeries across Gaza have been forced to close without enough cooking gas or flour⁴. The health system has also been devastated by the blockade, amidst rising casualties. The World Health

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/16/world/middleeast/israel-threatens-gaza-escalation.html>

2 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/05/04/israel-gaza-aid-distribution-plan/>

3 <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/six-weeks-since-israel-imposed-total-gaza-blockade-last-food-is-running-out-2025-04-09/>

4 <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/07/middleeast/israel-gaza-blockade-aid-agencies-intl/index.html>

Organization has reported critically low supplies for maternal and child health, including anesthesia and other items needed for cesarean sections and deliveries, blood units for surgeries, and other essential equipment⁵. 180,000 doses of routine childhood vaccinations have also not been permitted to enter Gaza, leaving children and infants more susceptible to life threatening illnesses⁶. The reduction in water supply from pipelines in Israel, coupled with shortages of power and fuel, has and will continue to impede access to safe drinking water. UNICEF estimates that access to drinking water for 1 million people, including 400,000 children, has dropped from 16 liters per person per day during the ceasefire to now only six liters, and if fuel runs out this could drop even further⁷. Given these compounding factors, malnutrition, preventable diseases and other conditions are expected to surge, impacting the wellbeing of millions of Palestinians.

We are moreover concerned that cutting off or severely restricting aid to Gaza harms Israel's long-term security. It is a stain on Israel's international reputation, that jeopardizes efforts to normalize relations with neighboring Arab states, who have condemned this action⁸. We echo the concerns expressed by hostage family members that the blockade of aid and electricity could worsen conditions for their loved ones who remain in Gaza⁹ who will also be forced to endure hunger, hazardous water sources, and potential disease outbreaks, on top of the already inhumane captivity they face at the hands of Hamas. There is also a frightening potential for such disease outbreaks, like the polio outbreak that began in 2024, to spread across borders and throughout the region. Mass civilian suffering additionally threatens to foment radicalization and militant anti-Israel sentiment.

We welcomed the ceasefire and hostage release agreement announced in January. After so many months, we were overjoyed to see hostages reunited with their families, and a surge in humanitarian aid¹⁰ that brought relief to Palestinian civilians facing hunger and displacement. At the same time, we were tremendously disturbed by Hamas' grotesque displays as they released hostages and the remains of those killed in captivity. We reiterate our unequivocal call for Hamas to immediately release the hostages who remain in Gaza.

We had hoped to see negotiations to advance the ceasefire deal to Phase II, to free the remaining hostages held by Hamas in Gaza and ultimately end the war. We are concerned to see the resumption of the war without a clear strategy or post-war governance plan for Gaza, and believe

5<https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/healthy-beginnings-hopeful-futures-on-world-health-day-who-calls-for-an-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza.html>

6<https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/healthy-beginnings-hopeful-futures-on-world-health-day-who-calls-for-an-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza.html>

7<https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/more-million-children-gaza-strip-deprived-lifesaving-aid-over-one-month-unicef>

8<https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-states-un-condemn-israels-halt-of-aid-into-gaza-until-hostage-outline-accepted/>

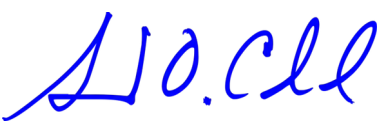
9https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/families-of-hostages-demand-israel-resume-electricity-to-gaza-threaten-to-go-to-high-court/

10 <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/aid-is-flowing-into-gaza-under-the-ceasefire-is-it-helping>

it is of the utmost importance to reach another ceasefire agreement. However, leveraging humanitarian aid to pressure Hamas, as Defense Minister Katz has stated is the Israeli strategy, is unacceptable and constitutes an act of collective punishment against Palestinian civilians in Gaza¹¹.

We implore your government to resume the flow of aid into Gaza. We also reiterate our support for a renewed ceasefire and hostage release deal to finally end this war — the only option to alleviate the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians and put the region on a path towards security and stability.

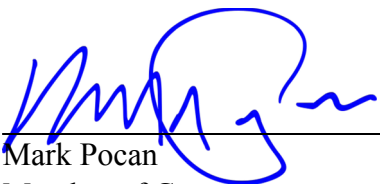
Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

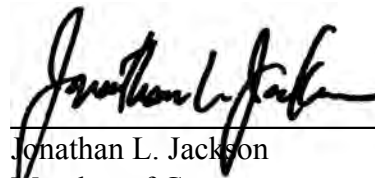
¹¹<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-defense-minister-says-no-humanitarian-aid-enter-gaza-tool-pressure-hamas-2025-04-16/>



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



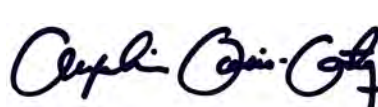
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



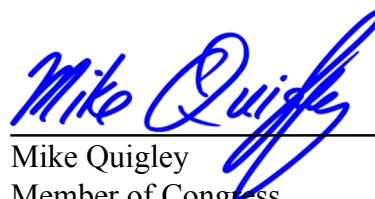
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Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



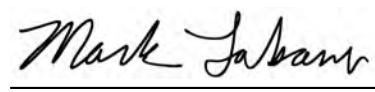
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



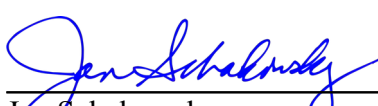
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



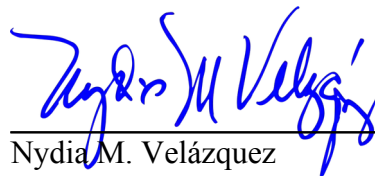
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



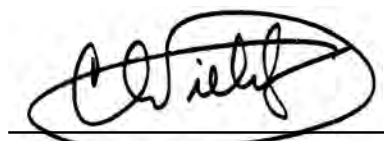
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



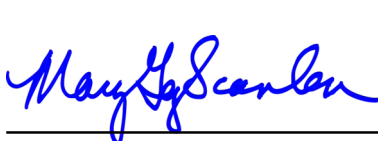
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



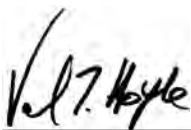
Cleo Fields
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Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



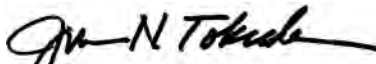
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



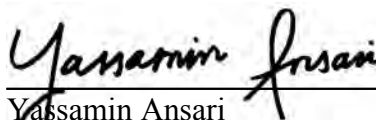
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



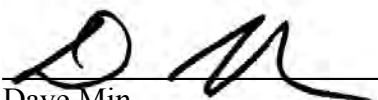
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



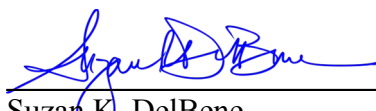
Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



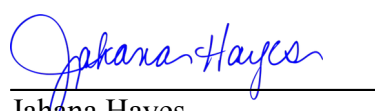
Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



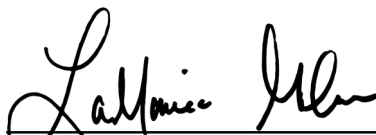
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



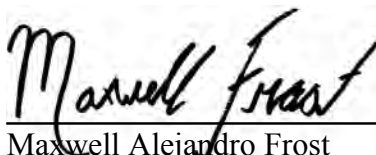
LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



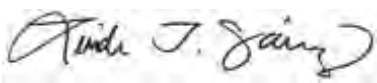
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



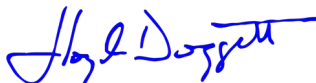
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Al Green
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



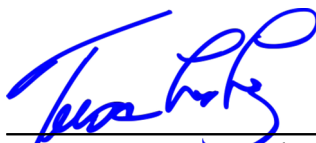
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



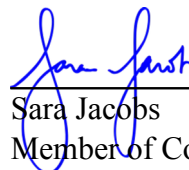
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



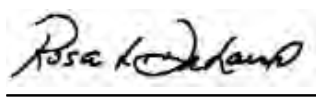
Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



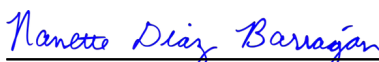
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



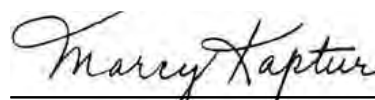
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



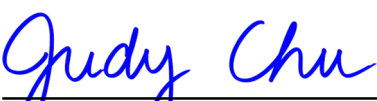
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



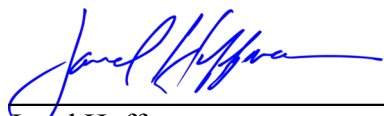
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



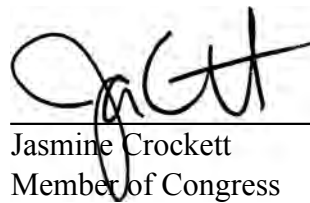
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



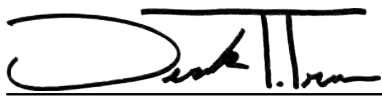
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



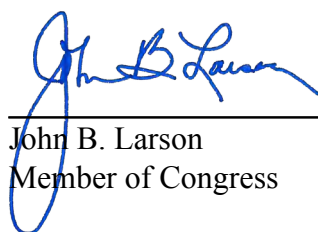
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



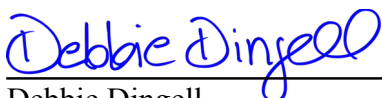
Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



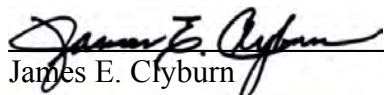
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



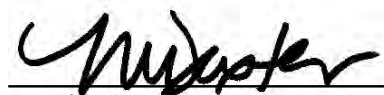
James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress (SC-06)



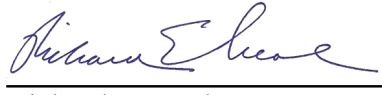
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



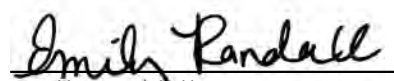
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress


Emily Randall
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Marco Rubio, United States Secretary of State