

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We are alarmed by the recent hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians, which represent the worst conflict in the region in years. We thank the administration for its work to secure the current ceasefire and urge you to use all diplomatic tools to support its implementation and continuation. We are concerned about the lack of respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in the conflict; we condemn Hamas's rocket attacks and have grave concerns regarding the impact of Israel's airstrikes in a densely populated area. Any civilian loss of life is a tragedy, and we are mindful of the unique challenges presented by the situation in Gaza, which will require urgent action to prevent an escalating disaster.

It is now urgent that we address the burgeoning humanitarian crisis while working toward a durable ceasefire and long-term steps to promote a sustainable, lasting peace in the region. We request you take three immediate steps:


1. **Work to sustain the current ceasefire:** This will allow for emergency relief distribution, emergency repairs to essential infrastructure, and for families to purchase food and water, seek medical care, and attend to other emergency needs.
2. **Support humanitarian access:** Urge Israel to open the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings so that critical humanitarian personnel, including a trauma coordinators and security advisors, can enter and emergency relief items can be brought in to address the growing needs of the civilian population. The United Nations (UN) also needs to evacuate non-essential international staff.
3. **Fully and robustly fund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA):** UNRWA is by far the largest humanitarian actor in Gaza. While the administration has provided UNRWA with \$150 million to date, this falls far short of historic funding levels. The administration must fund UNRWA at not less than 2017 levels (\$360 million) as well as robustly support its forthcoming emergency appeal, following all applicable US laws and vetting standards for recipients and implementing organizations.

With nowhere to run and nowhere to hide, it is civilians who are bearing the brunt of this conflict. Over 60 children have been killed and more than 71,000 civilians have sought protection inside of UNRWA's schools, hoping all parties to the conflict will continue to respect the neutrality of the UN's installations. For Gaza's children who have lived their entire lives under military blockade, they have now experienced the terror of living through yet another violent conflict.

In addition to the work that you are doing to support the current ceasefire, we strongly urge you to step up the United States' humanitarian engagement to save and protect innocent lives.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman Ed.D.
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
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Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
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Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Mike Doyle
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Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress