

DEBBIE DINGELL
12TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

116 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4071

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

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NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS
WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:

19855 WEST OUTER DRIVE
SUITE 103-E
DEARBORN, MI 48124
(313) 278-2936

301 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE
SUITE 400
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
(734) 481-1100

WEBSITE: DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV

May 10, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This letter is to request a briefing with the Department of State to Members of Congress to discuss steps that the Biden administration is taking to deescalate tensions and promote a peaceful resolution to the violence in Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and southern Israel that has occurred the past several days.

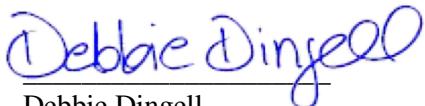
In recent days, there has been an increase in violence in the region following attempts by Israeli settlers to evict and displace Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, that is part of a unilateral attempt to force Palestinians out of the city. Following postponement of an Israeli judicial decision on this matter, there were multiple encounters over the weekend where Israeli police used heavy-handed tactics against Palestinian protesters and worshippers in and around the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. These were followed by additional clashes that resulted in numerous injuries and hospitalizations.

Following these events, there has been an increase in violence in Gaza and southern Israel, with a resumption of Hamas rocket attacks against nearby towns and civilians. The Israeli military has since responded with airstrikes against targets in the Gaza Strip, and this is a very dangerous situation for both sides that threatens to escalate further given the existing tensions between the two sides.

It is important that the United States play a constructive role in resolving this escalating situation through strong diplomatic engagement with Israelis and Palestinians to both prevent further violence and address the underlying drivers of the conflict, including continued settlement expansion and efforts to forcibly remove Palestinians from East Jerusalem. With this in mind, please provide a Congressional briefing as soon as practicable with Members of Congress to discuss actions that the United States is taking to address these developments and promote peace, dignity and security between Israelis and Palestinians.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress