

# 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 2023<sup>1</sup>. 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 plan<sup>2</sup> 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 depleted<sup>3</sup>, and the World Food Programme has stated that all 25 subsidized bakeries across Gaza have been forced to close without enough cooking gas or flour<sup>4</sup>. The health system has also been devastated by the blockade, amidst rising casualties. The World Health

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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 equipment<sup>5</sup>. 180,000 doses of routine childhood vaccinations have also not been permitted to enter Gaza, leaving children and infants more susceptible to life threatening illnesses<sup>6</sup>. 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 further<sup>7</sup>. 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 action<sup>8</sup>. 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 Gaza<sup>9</sup> 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 aid<sup>10</sup> 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

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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/>

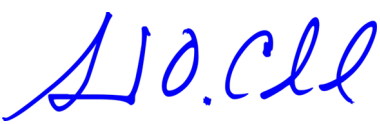
9[https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/families-of-hostages-demand-israel-resume-electricity-to-gaza-threaten-to-go-to-high-court/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/families-of-hostages-demand-israel-resume-electricity-to-gaza-threaten-to-go-to-high-court/)

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 Gaza<sup>11</sup>.

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.

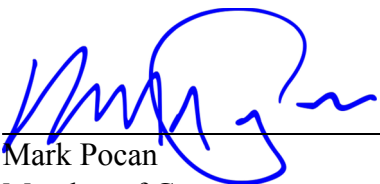
Sincerely,



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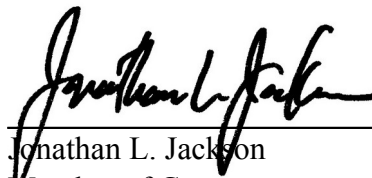
<sup>11</sup><https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-defense-minister-says-no-humanitarian-aid-enter-gaza-tool-pressure-hamas-2025-04-16/>



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
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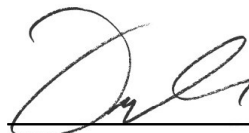
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Valerie P. Foushee  
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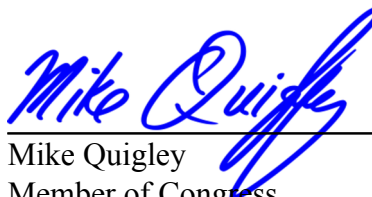
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Robert Garcia  
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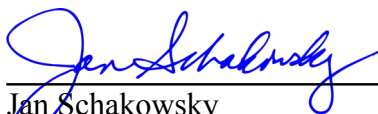
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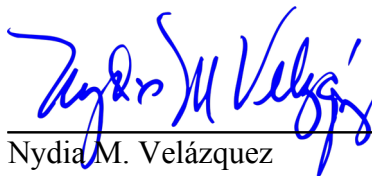
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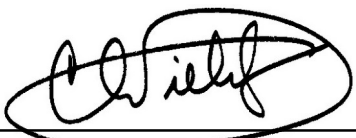
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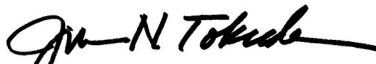
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Jerrold Nadler  
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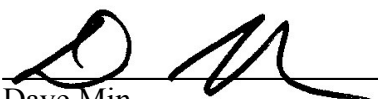
Stephen F. Lynch  
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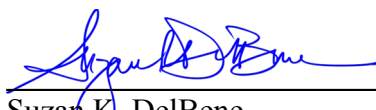
Yassamin Ansari  
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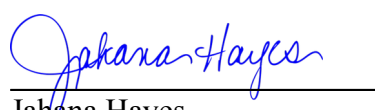
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Dave Min  
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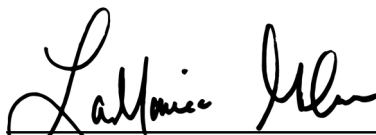
Suzan K. DelBene  
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Jahana Hayes  
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Veronica Escobar  
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LaMonica McIver  
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Lateefah Simon  
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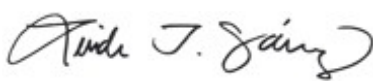
Mark DeSaulnier  
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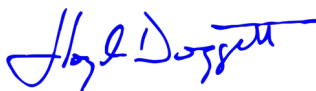
Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
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Al Green  
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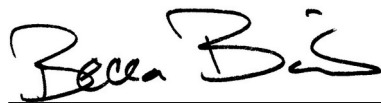
Linda T. Sánchez  
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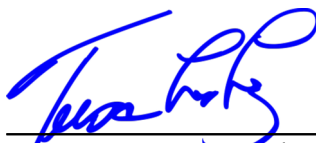
Lloyd Doggett  
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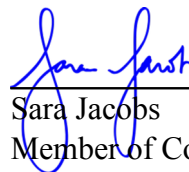
John Garamendi  
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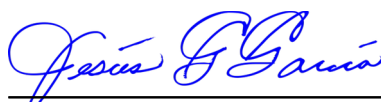
Doris Matsui  
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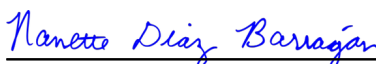
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



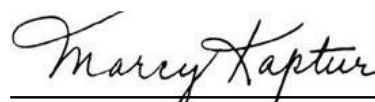
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



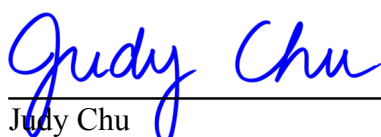
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

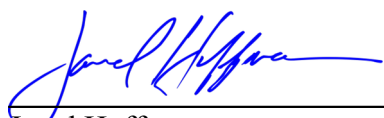


Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

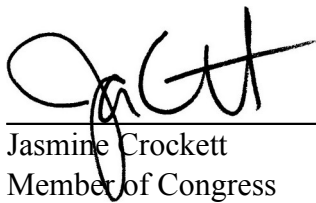


Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

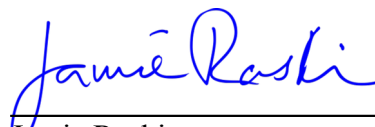




Jared Huffman  
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Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



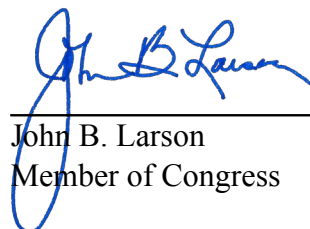
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



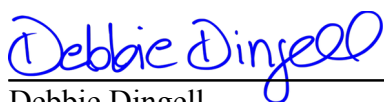
Derek T. Tran  
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Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



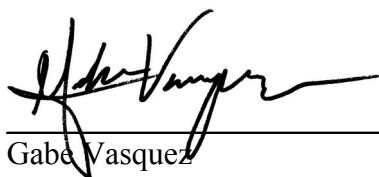
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



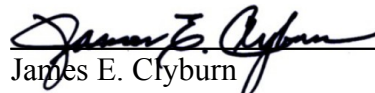
Gwen S. Moore  
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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



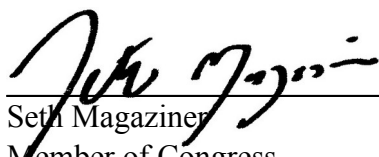
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James E. Clyburn  
Member of Congress (SC-06)



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



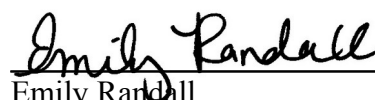
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



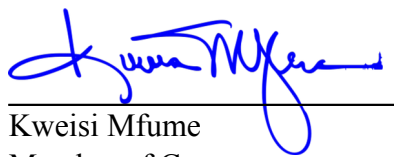
Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



Emily Randall  
Member of Congress



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Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress

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