

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to you to express our gravest concerns regarding the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe occurring in Gaza and the escalating violence in the West Bank.

The Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel of October 7, 2023, were an outrageous crime against humanity. But the ongoing Israeli military campaign in Gaza, waged by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has resulted in an unacceptable level of civilian casualties and the destruction of critical infrastructure. Conservative estimates put the number of Palestinians killed in the war at 30,000¹, nearly half of which are children. This is the highest rate of death among children in almost any other conflict in the world.²

New reporting from the International Food Security Phase Classification initiative (IPC) indicates that famine has already begun in northern Gaza and is at risk of spreading across the Gaza Strip, putting 2.2 million Palestinians into the “broadest and most severe food crisis in the world.”³ The need to deliver humanitarian aid by any means possible has never been more pressing. This fact was emphasized by your administration’s decision to begin air dropping supplies into Gaza in recent weeks, and your announcement of U.S. participation in constructing a temporary port in Gaza to expand the flow of aid.

In recent weeks, it has become clear that the Netanyahu government has obstructed the entry of critical humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Access for aid trucks continues to be denied at unacceptable levels and the Israeli government refuses to open additional border crossings to enable the entry of aid.⁴ It is apparent that the Netanyahu government is repeatedly interfering in U.S. humanitarian operations in direct violation of the *Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act* – Section 620I of the *Foreign Assistance Act of 1961* (22 USC 2378-1). Israel’s restriction of this aid and

¹ TIME: The Science Is Clear. Over 30,000 People Have Died in Gaza

² Al Jazeera: Over 13,000 children killed in Gaza, others severely malnourished: UNICEF

³ The Washington Post: Famine may already be in northern Gaza, leading aid groups say

⁴ The Washington Post: How Israel’s restrictions on aid put Gaza on the brink of famine

Prime Minister Netanyahu's refusal to address U.S. concerns on this issue is absolutely unacceptable.

We echo our colleagues in the U.S. Senate in imploring you to enforce U.S. law with the Netanyahu government. We ask your administration to reassess how our assistance is provided to Israel outside of Iron Dome, or other defensive systems provided to Israel pursuant to the provisions of the *National Defense Authorization Act*, unless and until the Netanyahu government allows the free flow of sufficient humanitarian aid into Gaza.

We also urge your administration to do the same if the Netanyahu government moves forward with any plan to launch a significant military operation in Rafah, a move that would put the 1.5 million Palestinians displaced from other parts of Gaza in imminent danger and exacerbate the rate of disease, starvation, and death in the conflict.

Mr. President, the situation in Gaza is dire. Immediate action from the United States is necessary to stop further loss of civilian life, and we urge you to use every tool at your disposal to end the suffering in this crisis and to keep this conflict from expanding.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress