



Congress of the United States

November 2, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write today as Members of Congress concerned for the well-being of the Americans who remain stranded in the Gaza Strip for four weeks. Although we are thrilled that hundreds of Americans have been able to leave, many of our constituents remain trapped in Gaza.

On October 7, 2023, we witnessed an appalling and unprecedented terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas. We condemn the horrifying violence and inhumane treatment that Israelis were and continue to be subjected to, as well as the taking of more than 200 hostages who continue to be held in Gaza.

We applaud President Biden's unequivocal support for Israel's right to defend its citizens, territory, and sovereignty. We sincerely appreciate the rapid deployment of FBI specialists and a hostage rescue team to help with negotiations for the hostages, as well as the immediate establishment of a dedicated task force at the State Department to track U.S. citizens. We support the ongoing dialogue with Israel and Egypt and the negotiations that led to the opening of the Rafah border crossing for limited crossings. However, we remain concerned by the lack of timely progress and information conveyed to Congress on the evacuation of Americans from Gaza.


Over the last week, we have seen particularly grave reports from humanitarian organizations working in the Gaza Strip regarding the availability of basic resources. Despite efforts to open the Rafah border crossing to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, only a small fraction of the 500 trucks that entered on a daily basis prior to October 7 are able to deliver assistance. The current situation is rapidly becoming a dire humanitarian catastrophe with nearly 600,000 displaced people residing in 150 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) facilities in the strip. Many of these shelters have exceeded four times their capacity, forcing people to sleep in the streets.

We do not have visibility into the condition in which our constituents find themselves. We understand some are being sheltered in United Nations facilities and safe zones in the south of Gaza. The UNRWA has reported that they are almost out of fuel and the power will be cut imminently at many, if not all, of these facilities. Communications and internet services have been disrupted several times over the last few days throughout Gaza. The anticipated Israeli ground offensive in Gaza will undoubtedly exacerbate an already dire situation, making evacuation even more challenging.


The United States should take responsibility for the safety and security of our citizens overseas. We request that you provide an urgent update on the actions taken to bring all Americans home.

We appreciate your attention to this time-sensitive matter.


Sincerely,




James A. Himes
Member of Congress



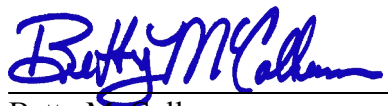
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André Carson
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Gwen S. Moore
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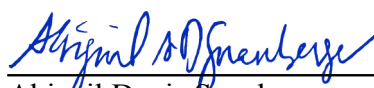
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Joaquin Castro
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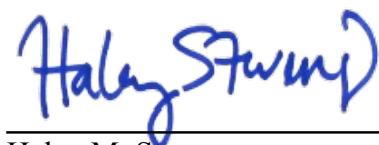
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Member of Congress



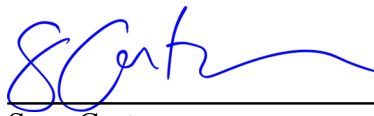
Abigail Davis Spanberger
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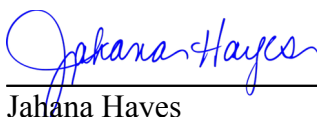
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



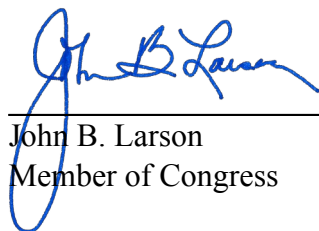
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