

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
United States Secretary of State  
The State Department  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to express our strong support for your efforts to secure humanitarian pauses in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict and to urgently scale up critically needed humanitarian assistance for the civilian population in the Gaza Strip while ensuring the safe release of all hostages. We particularly want to highlight the critical need to supply substantial amounts of fuel via vetted international or non-governmental organizations to relief groups working in Gaza. While we welcome the decision this week to allow a highly limited amount of fuel for United Nations trucks delivering aid, it is critical that we facilitate a solution for rapidly delivering substantial amounts of fuel to meet the full range of humanitarian needs.

Amidst the ongoing crisis, fuel is the single most critical aspect of humanitarian assistance needed right now—for everything from running the back-up generators that supply electricity to hospitals, pumping clean water for distribution throughout the Gaza Strip including by powering desalination plants, treating sewage, and delivering food and other necessities. Beyond the obvious need for clean drinking water, acceptable sanitary conditions, and stability for civilians currently located in overcrowded shelters, we are particularly alarmed that the lack of clean water in Gaza is creating the conditions for a massive potential public health crisis.

The World Health Organization and non-governmental organizations have documented that the local health system is on the verge of collapse. Seventy-one percent of primary health facilities and 18 of Gaza's 35 hospitals have shut down. Ninety-six percent of Gaza's groundwater is not fit for human consumption, with the ability to provide potable water dependent on fuel-run desalination plants. As fuel supplies have dwindled, so has the availability of potable water; on average civilians are now relying on just three liters of water per day for consumption, cooking, and hygiene—far short of the emergency standard of 15 liters per day.

As we saw with the 2016-2022 Cholera outbreak in Yemen—the largest in modern history—armed conflict that causes the disruption of a territory's health care system, large-scale population displacement, and the deterioration of water and sanitary systems are optimal conditions for the massive spread of infectious disease. Without quick action, Gaza may face similarly disastrous outbreaks.

We are also gravely concerned that the lack of functioning hospitals in Gaza due to a lack of electricity has, and will continue to, lead to unnecessary and avoidable civilian deaths. All of us understand and support Israel's right to defend itself within the confines of international law, and we appreciated both your and President Biden's strong calls for the protections of civilians. We believe providing fuel to ensure functioning medical services is not just a moral issue, but a necessity for Israel to ensure this conflict is conducted within the confines of international law.

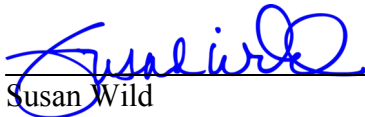
We understand that Hamas has played a major role in Gaza's lack of fuel, due to the terror organization's decision to hoard existing supplies. Additionally, some groups have argued against delivering fuel into the Strip for fear of Hamas diverting it for their own operations against Israel. However, as Special Envoy David Satterfield has expressed and you yourself stated before the Senate Appropriations Committee, the US alongside Israel has been able to closely monitor the humanitarian aid being sent into the Strip to ensure all relief reaches the intended recipient. According to both of your statements, so far there is no evidence of any

recently disbursed humanitarian aid being diverted to Hamas. We welcome the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)'s and Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories draft plan that would enable the delivery of fuel to hospitals in Gaza, and we urge you to work with the Israeli government toward its rapid implementation.

At this incredibly difficult time, we are confident in the risk mitigation measures employed by humanitarian organizations on the ground, and we believe that it is possible to find a pathway for the delivery of fuel and other vital assistance that meets the needs of civilians while preventing diversion of these resources by Hamas. As you continue pursuing more extensive humanitarian pauses and urgently needed progress on the release of all hostages, we ask that you continue to push your Israeli counterparts to increase the amount of all supplies, ensure that assistance can enter the Gaza Strip as part of humanitarian relief efforts, and allow fuel to enter the Strip under the IDF's existing monitoring plan.

Again, thank you. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you to advance these shared priorities.

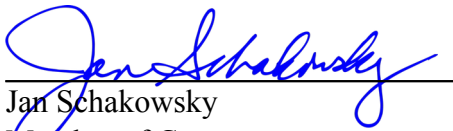
Sincerely,



Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



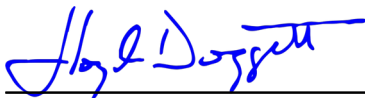
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



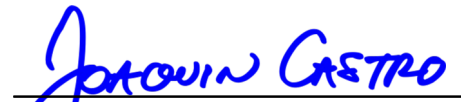
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



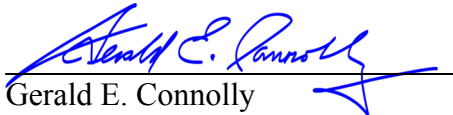
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

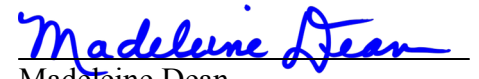


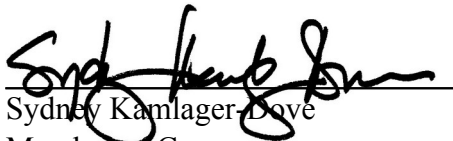
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress


  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress


  
Madeleine Dean  
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress

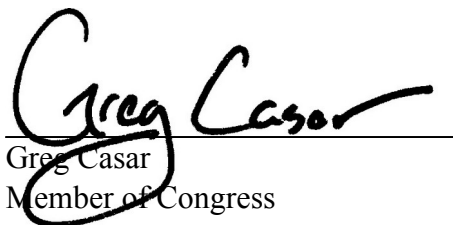
  
Matt Cartwright  
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Seth Moulton  
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Barbara Lee  
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Rosa L. DeLauro  
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Steve Cohen  
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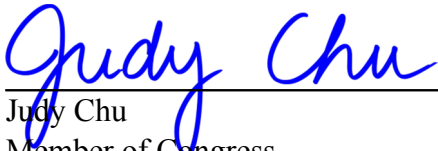
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress




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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



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Jim Tokuda  
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Zoe Lofgren  
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Paul D. Tonko  
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Katie Porter  
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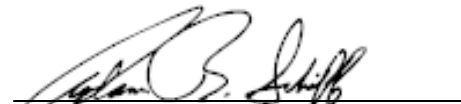
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

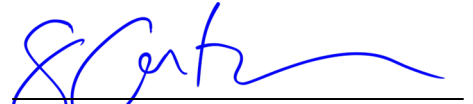


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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



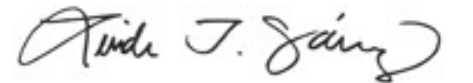
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



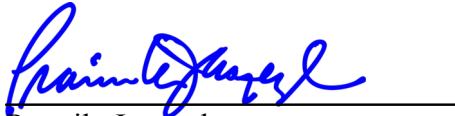
Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes  
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Linda T. Sánchez  
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Pramila Jayapal  
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Chellie Pingree  
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Troy Carter  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

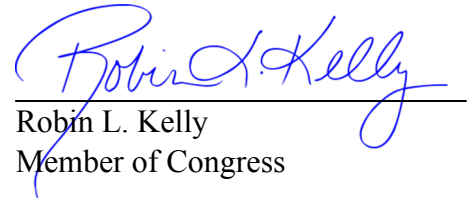


Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



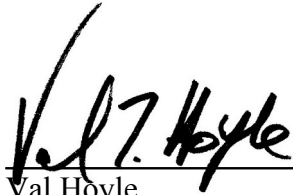
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Susie Lee  
Member of Congress



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Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



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Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



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Al Green  
Member of Congress



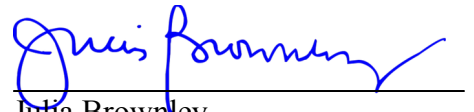
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

*André Carson*

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André Carson  
Member of Congress



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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress