

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

When you took office in January 2025, we were on a path to peace in the Israel-Gaza conflict, thanks in part to your team's efforts during the Presidential transition. A ceasefire was in effect and 30 hostages were reunited with their families. Hamas's military capacity had been effectively obliterated, with the IDF calling it a "guerilla terror group" that could no longer mount a sustained military operation against the people of Israel – a testament to both Israel's military prowess and the United States' unflinching support. But today, the United States is not providing critically needed leadership to drive peace forward, which is why we write to express our deep concern in advance of your upcoming travel to the Middle East.

Since March of this year, the situation on the ground has deteriorated dramatically. Fighting in Gaza has resumed, negotiations towards long-term regional security have collapsed, and dozens of hostages remain imprisoned by Hamas. In fact, we have not had a single hostage return home since February 26. In addition, we are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe in the third month of Israel's full blockade of food, water, and medicine into Gaza. This is the longest closure Gaza has ever faced. While the World Food Program ran out of food stocks inside Gaza on April 25, they report that more than 116,000 metric tons of food assistance – enough to feed one million people for up to four months – has been positioned outside Gaza at aid corridors, unable to enter. According to the United Nations, an estimated 90 percent of Gaza's population faces high levels of acute food and water insecurity, with most civilians facing emergency or crisis levels of hunger. Against this backdrop, the Israeli government's new aid proposal is simply not viable. It would limit aid distribution to just a few sites in southern Gaza secured by private U.S. contractors, and nearly all aid groups operating in the region note this would only increase insecurity and displacement. Roughly half of Gaza's 2.1 million people are children; a generation of starving children today would prevent a secure and peaceful Israel tomorrow.

This week, the Israeli government announced a plan to expand military operations and pursue a sustained, long-term occupation of Gaza. This is a dangerous inflection point for Israel and the region, and while we support ongoing efforts to eliminate Hamas, a full-scale reoccupation of Gaza would be a critical strategic mistake. The announcement has already escalated tensions in the Middle East, once again threatening to engulf the volatile region in conflict. The Houthis struck Israel's Ben Gurion airport on May 4 and have vowed to further retaliate against the

proposed occupation. Jordan, one of our most important regional security partners, is facing intensifying pressure amid continued public anger over Gaza. Saudi Arabia has made it clear there can be no progress towards normalization with Israel without a pathway toward Palestinian statehood. In this context, Israel's planned actions would severely undermine Jerusalem's path to a more secure, stable and regionally integrated future, which you championed in your first term through the Abraham Accords.

Israel's proposed occupation plans take us further away from permanently ending the Israel-Gaza war and upholding Israel's security, both goals that you have promised to achieve under your administration. As such, in advance of your upcoming visit, we urge you to oppose a permanent reoccupation of Gaza and to press for the immediate resumption of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance, access, and distribution that fully meets the needs of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

You also have a unique opportunity to press the parties to agree to a deal that:

- (1) secures the immediate release of all remaining hostages;
- (2) ushers in a ceasefire;
- (3) works towards the creation of a security force backed by Arab partners to administer Gaza without Hamas; and
- (4) creates a path towards a lasting solution that will allow the Israeli and Palestinian people to live in security, dignity, and prosperity.

Mr. President, like you, we are unequivocal in our commitment to Israel's right to defend itself. It has been nearly 20 months since Hamas murdered more than 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages, including American citizens. This period has also been marked by severe humanitarian suffering in Gaza, where more than 52,000 Palestinians have been killed and millions displaced. All of us are longstanding advocates of the U.S.-Israel security partnership, and we will continue to fight for the defense of the Israeli people. That is why, today, we stand with the nearly three-quarters of the Israeli public who are fighting for the release of the remaining hostages in Gaza in exchange for a ceasefire.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



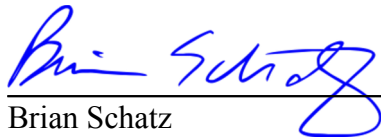
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



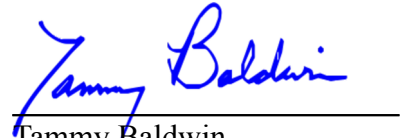
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



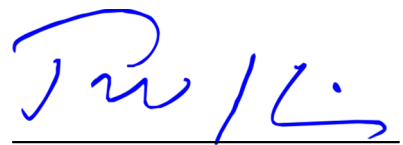
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



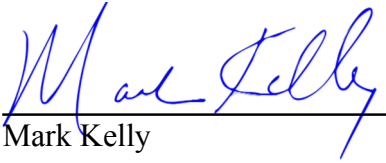
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



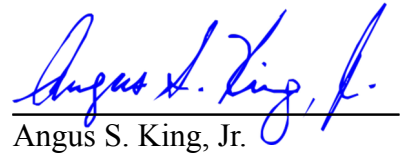
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



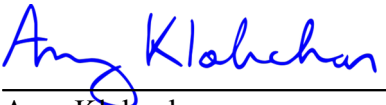
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



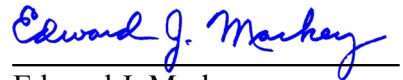
Mark Kelly
United States Senator




Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



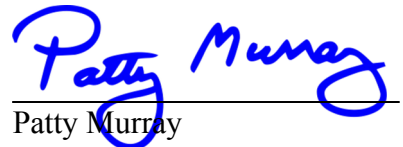
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



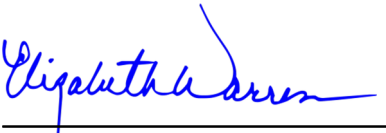
Patty Murray
United States Senator



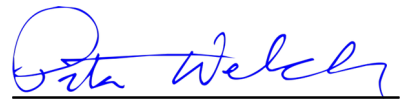
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

CC: Marco Rubio, Secretary of State
Steve Witkoff, U.S. Special Envoy