

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken,

We write to express our shared concern and outrage regarding the recent Israeli airstrike which killed seven World Central Kitchen aid workers, including an American citizen. In light of this incident, we strongly urge you to reconsider your recent decision to authorize the transfer of a new arms package to Israel, and to withhold this and any future offensive arms transfers until a full investigation into the airstrike is completed. If this strike is found to have violated U.S. or international law, we urge you to continue withholding these transfers until those responsible are held accountable. We also urge you to withhold these transfers if Israel fails to sufficiently mitigate harm to innocent civilians in Gaza, including aid workers, and if it fails to facilitate – or arbitrarily denies or restricts – the transport and delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

It is estimated that over 32,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the start of this war,¹ nearly half of whom are children.² The most recent report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative (IPC) indicates that 1.1 million people in Gaza are experiencing catastrophic food insecurity and widespread famine is imminent and expected to occur anytime between now and the next month if there is not an immediate cessation of hostilities.

While we appreciate your administration's recent efforts to increase the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, these efforts will not be sufficient to meet the extraordinary need on the ground. The Israeli government's restrictions on the flow of aid into Gaza, coupled with the death and grave harm that aid workers have faced during this war, are compounding this hunger crisis. Recent reports indicate that hundreds of aid trucks sit idle outside the Rafah border crossing due to Israel's restrictions.³ And now over 200 aid workers have been killed since the start of the war. These attacks and deaths are having a chilling effect with the World Central

¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/live-blog/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-rcna146148>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/unicef-says-over-13000-children-killed-gaza-israel-offensive-2024-03-17/>

³ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/gaza-aid-trucks-border-famine-imminent-rcna144830>

Kitchen and other humanitarian groups now suspending their operations in Gaza. Until now, World Central Kitchen has provided more than 43 million meals to Palestinians in Gaza, lending support to 68 community kitchens throughout the territory and serving more than 170,000 hot meals each day. Its services are irreplaceable, and its absence will fuel the growing hunger crisis in Gaza.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has stated that this was a “tragic case of our forces unintentionally hitting innocent people.”⁴ If this is true, it is a shockingly unacceptable mistake. We strongly urge your administration to conduct a thorough investigation into this airstrike to determine how the aid convoy could have been mistakenly targeted despite coordinating their movements with the Israeli military and traveling in clearly marked vehicles.⁵

Given the horrifying facts on the ground, we are also greatly concerned by your recent decision to authorize an arms transfer to Israel, which reportedly includes 1,800 MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 500 MK-82 500-pound bombs, and 25 F-35A fighter jets.⁶ The MK-84 2000-pound bombs have been linked to multiple mass casualty events in Gaza and are capable of killing or wounding people more than 1,000 feet away. We are also concerned by recent reports that the administration is considering authorizing another \$18 billion arms transfer to include dozens of F-15 aircraft.⁷

In light of the recent strike against aid workers and the ever-worsening humanitarian crisis, we believe it is unjustifiable to approve these weapons transfers. We again strongly urge you to withhold any offensive weapons transfers until the investigation into the airstrike is concluded and, if it is found this strike violated U.S. or international law, those responsible are held accountable. And we again urge you to ensure that any future military assistance to Israel, including already authorized transfers, is subject to conditions to ensure it is used in compliance with U.S. and international law.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/02/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news#world-central-kitchen-strike-gaza>

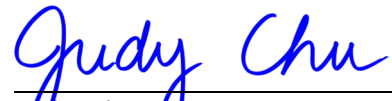
⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-aid-workers-killed>

⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/29/us-weapons-israel-gaza-war/>

⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/2/biden-considers-18bn-arms-transfer-to-israel-including-f-15-jets-report>



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



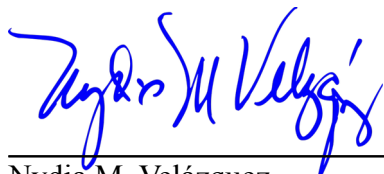
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



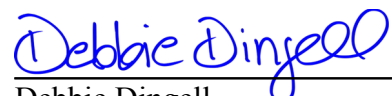
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



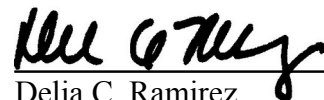
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



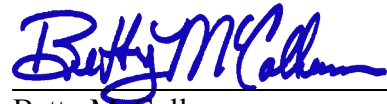
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



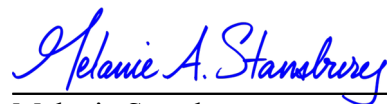
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



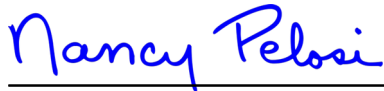
Summer Lee
Member of Congress



Madéleine Dean
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



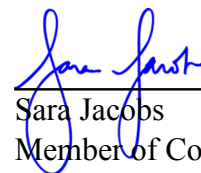
André Carson
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



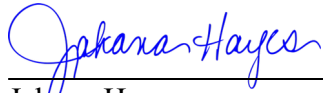
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



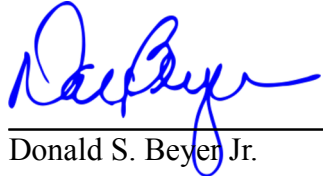
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



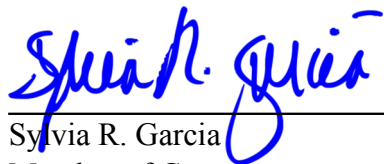
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress




Cori Bush
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress