

November 11, 2024

The Honorable Joseph Biden Jr
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you wrap up your term in office, the threat of escalation in the Middle East looms large. Israel continues its wars in Gaza and Lebanon, and the cycle of retaliation with Iran continues. The administration's policy towards Israel has failed, and in the time you have remaining as president it is essential that you begin charting a new course. In particular, we urge you to hold Israel accountable to U.S. law, ending arms sales to Israel to protect U.S. interests, achieve a ceasefire, protect civilians, increase aid access in Gaza, secure the release of the hostages, and work towards a stable future for the region.

The current policy of unconditional support of Israel paired with empty threats has brought the U.S. to the brink of war and allowed a close partner to commit apparent war crimes¹ using U.S. military aid and taxpayer dollars.² Israel has bombed hospitals, schools, and residential areas³, blocked humanitarian aid, and killed tens of thousands of civilians, including journalists⁴ and humanitarian workers,⁵ without the United States' "full support"⁶ ever wavering.

Not only has Israel misused U.S. aid, they have actively put U.S. troops and interests in danger. In multiple instances, Israel has taken major escalatory actions, reportedly without giving the U.S.

¹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). "UN Commission Finds War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Israeli Attacks on Gaza Health Facilities and Treatment of Detainees, Hostages." Press release, October 10, 2024.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/un-commission-finds-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-israeli-attacks>.

² Brown University, Costs of War, "Costs of War: U.S. Support Since October 7, 2023," October 2023.

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2023/2024/Costs%20of%20War_US%20Support%20Since%20Oct%207%20FINAL%20v2.pdf

³ Harvard University, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, "Press Release: New Study of Satellite Data Shows Israel's Assault on Hospitals, Schools, and Water Infrastructure in the Gaza Strip Was Not Random," April 9, 2024.

<https://fxb.harvard.edu/2024/04/09/press-release-new-study-of-satellite-data-shows-israels-assault-on-hospitals-schools-and-water-infrastructure-in-the-gaza-strip-was-not-random/>.

⁴ Middle East Eye. "Israel Killed More Journalists in October than in Any Other Conflict in 30 Years." October 2024.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-killed-more-journalists-october-any-other-conflict-30-years>

⁵ Al Jazeera. "UN Reports Gaza War Caused Major Spike in Aid Worker Deaths in 2023." August 19, 2024.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/19/un-reports-gaza-war-caused-major-spike-in-aid-worker-deaths-in-2023>.

⁶ Alexander, Peter. "Biden Says Iranian Attack Was Ineffective, Vows Full Support of Israel." NBC News, October 1, 2024.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/biden-says-iranian-attack-was-ineffective-vows-full-support-of-israel-220609093767>.

government advance notice,⁷ despite knowing that the retaliation would likely impact U.S. bases and service members in the region, as well as American citizens in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

Without strong U.S. presidential leadership willing to use the office's significant leverage to rein in their tactics, the Israeli government has no incentive to change its behavior. Continuing with the status-quo approach risks additional escalation, further devastation for civilians — including hostages — in Palestine and Lebanon, and the United States being dragged into another war in the Middle East.

Much of Israel's conduct has been in violation of international law and the continued provision of military assistance to Israel is in direct violation of U.S. law. Up to this point, the administration has been unwilling to enforce the law, but there are opportunities to hold Israel accountable moving forward. While a 30 day deadline to comply with longstanding U.S. laws is not required, the letter from Secretaries Blinken and Austin sent to Yoav Gallant in October, demanding Israel permit the delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, provides an opportunity to course correct U.S. policy and finally enforce section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act. As you know, this law requires the U.S. government to withhold all military assistance until Israel permits U.S. humanitarian aid access. To safeguard our own democracy, we encourage you to ensure that U.S. law is enforced, in this case and in others.

The longer the U.S. allows its power and global standing to be undermined by this conflict, the more cost the United States will bear in reputation, taxpayer dollars, and possibly servicemember and citizens' lives. In your final months in office, we urge you to do everything in your power to end U.S. military aid to Israel to stop Israel's assaults on civilians and maintain regional stability.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Action Corps
Adorers of the Blood of Christ US Region JPIC Office
American Friends Service Committee
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Amnesty International USA
Center for International Policy
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)
CODEPINK
DAWN
Demand Progress Education Fund
Doctors Against Genocide
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Historians for Peace and Democracy
MENA American Chamber Of Commerce
Migrant Roots Media

⁷ Reuters, "U.S. Did Not Have Advanced Warning of Israeli Strike in Beirut, Pentagon Says," September 27, 2024.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-did-not-have-advanced-warning-israeli-strike-beirut-pentagon-says-2024-09-27/>.

Pax Christi USA
Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus
Peace Action
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
Teachers Against Genocide
United for Peace and Justice
US Province of Society of Helpers
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)
Vote for Peace
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US

State/Local Organizations:

Action Corps MN
AMEEN
Arlington for Palestine
Benedictines for Peace
Brooklyn for Peace
Chicago Area Peace Action (CAPA)
Coalition for Peace Action
Maine Coalition for Palestine
MARUF CT - Muslim Advocacy for Rights, Unity, and Fairness
Maryland Peace Action
Massachusetts District 8 for Palestine
Massachusetts Peace Action
Minnesota Peace Project
New Jersey Peace Action
New York Progressive Action Network
Pax Christi Illinois
Pax Christi Long Island
Pax Christi Massachusetts
Pax Christi Metro New York (PCMNY)
Pax Christi New York State
Pax Christi Northern California
Peace Action New York State
Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi
Plymouth for Palestine
Presentation Sisters San Francisco, California
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Bay Area
Syracuse for Palestinian and Greater Liberation
Veterans For Peace, Chapter 113-Hawaii
Veterans for Peace, NYC Chapter 34
Wellfleet for Palestine
Western Massachusetts Pax Christi
Western States Legal Foundation

