

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for HJ0002, championed by Delegate Acevero, advocating for a long-term ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. This resolution reflects a crucial step towards promoting peace, stability, and justice in the region.

The staggering toll of over 30,000 lives lost in Gaza, with 70% being women and children, is a harrowing reality that cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the destruction of every hospital in Gaza exacerbates the humanitarian crisis, leaving countless without essential medical care.

Doctors, scholars, journalists, and even poets have been targeted and killed at unprecedented rates, adding another layer of tragedy to this conflict. Their contributions to society, extinguished by bombs, underscore the urgency for a resolution that prioritizes human life and the pursuit of a peaceful coexistence.

As a resident of Maryland, I am deeply affected by the personal toll this conflict has taken on our community, where friends and family have been lost in Gaza. The human cost is immeasurable, compelling us to take a stand for the countless lives affected.

In the spirit of unity and remembrance, I conclude with the poignant words of Refaat Alareer in his final poem "If I Must Die":

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze —  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself —  
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above,  
and thinks for a moment an angel is there  
bringing back love.  
If I must die  
let it bring hope,  
let it be a story.

Refaat was killed by an Israeli air strike.

I urge you to lend your support to HJ0002, signaling our dedication to peace and the well-being of all affected communities.