

MDFORCEASEFIRE

Four Hundred Constituents Urge Maryland Congressional
Delegation to Speak Out for Cease-Fire in Gaza

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To: Representative Andy Harris, Representative Dutch Ruppersberger, Representative John Sarbanes, Representative Glenn Ivey, Representative Steny Hoyer, Representative David Trone, Representative Kweisi Mfume, Representative Jamie Raskin, Senator Ben Cardin, and Senator Chris Van Hollen

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS DELIVERED IN PERSON ON JANUARY 26, 2024
AND BY EMAIL ON JANUARY 30, 2024

We, the undersigned, constituents from across the state of Maryland, urge you to publicly join us in calling for (1) an immediate and durable ceasefire in Israel-Palestine, (2) the return of all Israeli hostages and civilian detainees in Gaza, (3) an end to our government's military aid and arms sales to Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right extremist Israeli government, and (4) significantly greater sanctions against all settlers in the West Bank who have engaged in violence against Palestinians and/or live in unauthorized settlements on stolen land.

1. The urgent need for a durable ceasefire. According to a December 22, 2023 [Associated Press report](#), Israel's U.S.-backed offensive in Gaza has wreaked more destruction, proportionally, than the Allied bombing of Germany in World War II and in just two months has killed more civilians than the three-year-long U.S.-led campaign against the Islamic State. Over 23,000 people in Gaza have been killed—more than two-thirds of them women and children—and 85 percent of Gazan families have been displaced from their homes. Survivors are facing starvation and disease. This degree of suffering is unacceptable to us, as it should be to you. Unfortunately, Netanyahu's government has shown that it is unwilling to prosecute its offensive in an ethical or legal manner. Accordingly, we ask you to support an immediate and durable ceasefire.

2. The return of all hostages and civilian detainees. We know you support the immediate and unconditional release of the more than 100 hostages held by Hamas, as do we. Following its invasion of Gaza, Netanyahu's government has detained without charge thousands of Gazan civilians—such as Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha, whose experience was recounted in the [New Yorker](#). In addition to calling for the unconditional release of all Hamas-held hostages, we urge you to call for Netanyahu's government to release the Gazan civilians it has detained.

3. An end to military aid and sales. According to expert analysis of bomb fragments, most of the killing and destruction in Gaza has been caused by [U.S.-made bombs](#). In addition to our government's regular, ongoing military support of an Israeli government led by far-right extremists, just weeks ago our State Department approved the sale of 14,000 tank rounds worth over \$100 million to that same government. Despite evidence that Israel's tactics in Gaza violate international law, the U.S. has generally issued only rhetorical warnings with no meaningful impact while it continues to send military equipment that Netanyahu's government is using in unacceptable ways. The result is that U.S.-made arms are facilitating a humanitarian disaster of generational proportions for civilian families in Gaza. We urge you to oppose any further military aid or sales to this extremist Israeli government and to communicate that opposition to President Biden.

4. Sanctions against West Bank settlers who engage in violence. The U.S. has long opposed Israel's decades-old policy of expanding its settlements for Jewish Israelis in the occupied West Bank, all while those settlements grew in size and number. Now, settlers

have used the war in Gaza to perpetrate further violence against Palestinians, violently evicting them from their villages, stealing their land, and destroying their crops and property. The U.S. recently announced a visa ban on settlers engaging in such violence—a welcome step, but not nearly enough. We urge you to call for the U.S. to impose additional sanctions—such as financial sanctions—against these and other settlers who have engaged in violence against Palestinians, as well as all settlers living in unauthorized settlements on stolen land. It is long past time for U.S. policy opposing such settlements to consist of more than empty words.

Nothing excuses the atrocities Hamas committed on October 7 or the ongoing atrocity of Hamas continuing to hold hostages. But the violence that Netanyahu's government has inflicted on Gaza has been morally indefensible and grossly disproportionate. Violence will not solve the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. We urge you to adopt the positions in this letter, help advocate for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine, and exert maximum pressure on the Biden administration to do the same.

Sincerely,

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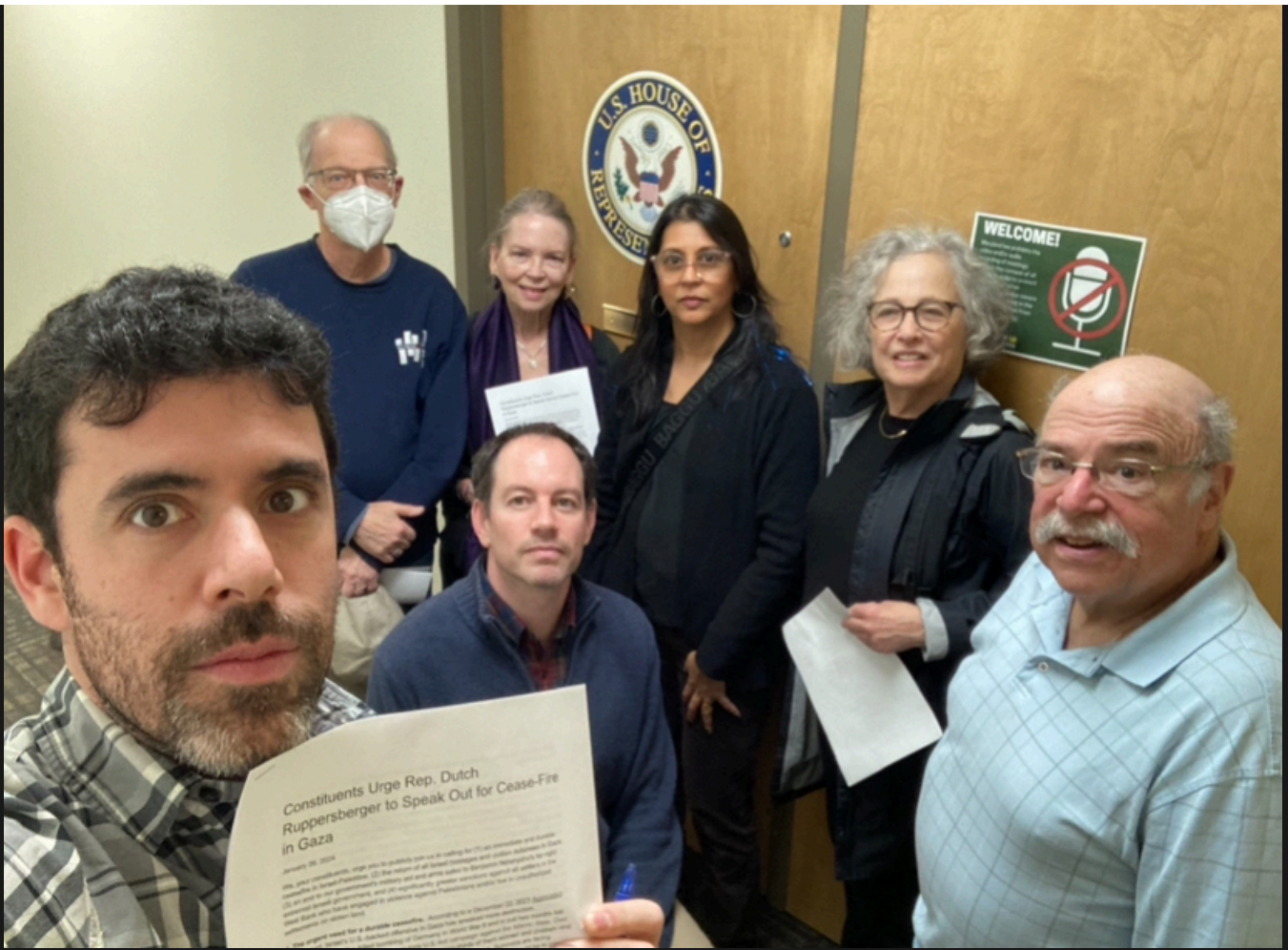
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and others

For more information about this letter or to add your name, please contact
mdforceasefire@gmail.com



Constituents deliver letter urging Rep. Dutch Ruppertsberger to speak out for cease-fire in Gaza. January 26, 2024



Signatories meet with Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger's staff on Feb 12, 2024