

March 4, 2024
Chair Del. Anne Healey
Maryland House of Delegates
Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

Re: Testimony IN FAVOR OF House Joint Resolution 2 (HJ0002), Supporting a Long-Term Ceasefire in Israel and Palestine

Hon. Committee Members:

I am Noah (preferred name, “Noelle”) Black, a resident of Mondawmin and constituent of District 40. I am a journalist and Middle East Studies academic horrified by the destruction of Gaza and the depraved indifference to human life shown by Israel’s military. As a journalist, the targeting of media professionals by the Israeli military is particularly haunting, as it is a clear attempt to eliminate the global community’s ability to monitor war crimes and to counter disinformation disseminated by the Israeli military and government. I thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of House Joint Resolution 2 calling for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine. As a supporter of Jewish Voice for Peace and a Muslim ally member of If Not Now, I support an immediate ceasefire, along with growing numbers of other Americans who share my values.

The U.S. must call for a permanent ceasefire to prevent the further loss of life. 66% of voters and 80% of Democrats support a permanent ceasefire. It is the will of the American people. The U.S. should not send a single additional weapon or funding to the Israeli government as it openly commits war crimes and has pending genocide investigations against it.

We support a call for a return of all hostages in Israel and all political prisoners in Gaza — everyone for everyone. The Israeli government has made it clear that they are not actually working to free the hostages - indeed, they shot three hostages simply because they thought they were Palestinian civilians. A ceasefire would free them, not further military action.

There are currently approximately 2,000 Palestinians being held in “administrative detention” in Israel, meaning they are held indefinitely without charge. There is no military solution to this. We need to address the root causes: Israeli military occupation and supporting apartheid, and our own government’s role in funding these violations of international law. Israeli military oppression does not help in freeing Israeli hostages.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HJ0002. I implore you to vote on the right side of history – and with the will of your constituents – and pass this bill to save precious lives hanging in the balance.