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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HJR 2
SUPPORTING A LONG-TERM CEASEFIRE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE**

I come from a family of Jewish heritage and was a Zionist in my youth. Over the years, I have become more concerned about the fate of Palestinians under Israel occupation for more than five decades. I urge you to issue a favorable report on this resolution calling for a long-term ceasefire in Israel and Palestine.

I will focus on the suffering of the Palestinian people. Currently, neutral parties report that Israel is slowing inspections of aid trucks so that fewer than one fifth of the needed aid can be delivered on an average day – fewer than 100 trucks are getting through compared with more than 500 before the war.ⁱ There is now an acute shortage of drinkable water, food, and medicine. We have had the first reports of children starving to death, but a disturbing percentage of Palestinians in both the north and south of Gaza are food-deprived. Patients are enduring Caesarian sections and amputations without anesthesia.

The terms of any ceasefire must include a rapid and dramatic increase in the delivery of aid. The U.S. government has been supplying military aid to Israel for decades, and the President is currently asking for about \$10 billion more in military aid. But the situation demands immediate and urgent humanitarian aid. The resolution before you calls for “delivery of adequate humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people.” The U.S. government is the most capable in the world to scale up the rapid delivery of a broad spectrum of aid. Your endorsement of HJR 2 and its speedy submission to our Congressional Delegation can help catalyze a humanitarian response.

At a time when the ally of our nation stands in the dock of the International Court of Justice accused of genocide and when that Court has issued an order that Israel has defied,ⁱⁱ it is everyone’s responsibility to act urgently to save lives. The Maryland General Assembly can play its role in turning around a situation that will only sink to more catastrophic depths. Please do not seek to evade responsibility – it is everyone’s responsibility to save the lives of children and others who have no defense and little chance of survival without our help. The members of this Rules Committee are leaders. Please show leadership in this dire emergency by acting today.

ⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/19/us-food-medicine-aid-gaza-un-famine-warnings-israel>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/02/israel-defying-icj-ruling-to-prevent-genocide-by-failing-to-allow-adequate-humanitarian-aid-to-reach-gaza/>