

The Honorable Chair
Delegate Anne Healey
Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates Room 230
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: FAVORABLE - SUPPORT of House Joint Resolution 0009
Condemning Violence and Violations of Law - Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza,
and Sudan**

To the Chair Delegate Anne Healey, Vice Chair Delegate Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., and esteemed members of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee,

My name is Desiree Mortenson, I am a resident of Frederick County in District 1. I am writing to name my support to HJ0009 the “Condemning Violence and Violations of Law - Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, and Sudan” resolution. This resolution is an important step towards aligning our country with international law and our own domestic law, decrying the violence that we are directly or indirectly supporting through our foreign policy. We must make a clear statement to our Federal elected officials that we, the State of Maryland, *do not* support the country’s actions to allow the perpetration of humanitarian atrocities abroad.

I hold a doctorate in International Relations and have researched U.S. foreign policy in the MENA region extensively. I was shocked by the slaughter on October 7, 2023. I am also so disheartened by the 68,000 people that have been killed in the Israel/Hamas war, the majority of which are civilians. I am alarmed that the U.S. has spent roughly \$30 billions of taxpayer funds towards this effort, and Gaza has been bombed into rubble and a man-made famine.

People in District 1 value respect for human rights, international law, and the protection of civilians during conflict. Supporting this resolution reflects the commitment of many Frederick County residents to ensuring that U.S. policies do not contribute to humanitarian suffering abroad. We want to promote policies that discourage prolonged and costly military conflict and humanitarian crises. It also allows Maryland communities like ours to voice support for accountability, peace, responsible stewardship of federal resources, and the protection of vulnerable populations worldwide.

For these reasons and many more, **I ask the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee to give HJ 0009 a favorable report.**

Thank you for your time,
Desiree Mortenson
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