

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

My name is Ian Thompson. I am a resident of Frederick (District 3) and a member of Frederick for Justice in Palestine. I am offering this testimony in strong support of 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 both directly and indirectly supporting through U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. tax dollars that fund it. We must make a clear statement to our Federal elected officials that we, the State of Maryland, do not support the country’s complicity in the perpetration of gross human rights violations and humanitarian atrocities all around the world.

Some may rightly ask why it is important for state lawmakers to weigh-in on matters of U.S. foreign policy. The answer is clear. Our taxes fund it. To give but one example, according to Not My Tax Dollars, which is a project of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action, Maryland taxpayers annually fund nearly \$375 million in weapons for Israel. What could we be using this funding for instead? This could fund free or low-cost healthcare for a year for 130,394 children. This could pay the salaries of 4,091 elementary school teachers for a year. This could cancel loan debt for 9,917 students.

I strongly support HJ0009 and its call for an immediate and sustained ceasefire or cessation of hostilities to protect civilians; full, unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations; the release of all unlawfully detained civilians; and independent investigations and accountability for violations of international law.

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 and consideration.

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