

March 12, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to express our deep concern regarding continued U.S. security assistance to Israel despite Israeli [restrictions](#) on humanitarian aid, an apparent violation of U.S. law. We demand that you urgently comply with U.S. law and end U.S. support for catastrophic human suffering in Gaza.

On March 2, the United States [began](#) its first airdrops of humanitarian aid into Gaza – a risky, expensive, and ineffective method for assisting civilians that is widely considered an option of last resort. On March 7, your administration [announced](#) that it would build a floating pier along the Gaza coast to bring aid to the population. Both efforts are the latest implicit recognition of Israel's severe restrictions on humanitarian access amid extraordinary human suffering. Your administration has now [publicly recognized](#) what humanitarian organizations have reported for months: that the government of Israel is obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid to starving Palestinians.

Gaza's health ministry reports that more than 30,000 Palestinians – at least two-thirds of them women and children – have been [killed](#) in Gaza and over 70,000 wounded, with thousands more [estimated](#) to be buried under the rubble. [Over 90 percent](#) of people in Gaza are acutely food insecure, with a [growing number](#) of children dying of starvation and dehydration. [Over 75 percent](#) of Gaza's population is already displaced, and the level of [damage](#) to shelter and infrastructure means people increasingly have nowhere safe to go nor reliable provisions if and when they move. As civilians face bombardment, disease, and starvation, lifesaving health care is increasingly inaccessible.

The United States is a leading donor of the humanitarian response in Gaza. Secretary Blinken has [called](#) on Israel to “maximize every possible means” to get aid to Gazans, noting that “the situation, as it stands, is simply unacceptable.” And you have rightly [said](#) you will accept “no more excuses” for continued obstacles to aid. But since October 7, the government of Israel has failed to facilitate the entry of sufficient humanitarian aid, including through additional border crossings into Gaza and northern Gaza in particular; [blocked](#) the entry of many humanitarian aid trucks; [denied](#) humanitarian access requests; enforced [arbitrary customs restrictions](#) on humanitarian goods; and attacked [humanitarian workers](#) and their [facilities](#) as well as [civilians seeking aid](#). Longtime U.S. implementing partners around the world have come under attack in Gaza, and lifesaving U.S.-funded humanitarian aid has been blocked from entering Gaza. Just last week, hours after your State of the Union address, an Israeli airstrike on a housing complex hosting displaced people [killed](#) a humanitarian aid worker employed by a US-based NGO.

These restrictions are not isolated instances but the policy of the government of Israel: as Prime Minister Netanyahu [stated clearly](#) on October 18, “We will not allow humanitarian assistance in the form of food and medicines from our territory to the Gaza Strip.” While Israel has subsequently allowed some aid into Gaza, it remains far from sufficient – a fact that Netanyahu confirmed when he [stated](#) in January that Israel was only allowing a "minimum" amount of relief into Gaza. During your own State of the Union address, you implicitly [acknowledged](#) that Israel was using humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip. [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Oxfam](#) have determined that the Israeli government is committing a war crime by using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to provide Israel with unconditional arms transfers and other security assistance. This not only facilitates Israel’s harmful conduct, but also appears to violate Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S.C. § 2378–1), which prohibits the United States from providing security assistance or arms sales to any country when the President is made aware that the government “prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance.”

U.S. weapons, security assistance, and blanket political support have contributed to an unparalleled humanitarian crisis and possible war crimes in Gaza. We demand that you urgently comply with U.S. law, end U.S. support for catastrophic human suffering in Gaza, and use your leverage to protect civilians and ensure the impartial provision of humanitarian assistance.

Signed,

Airwars  
American Friends Service Committee  
Amnesty International USA  
Anera  
Arms Control Association  
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)  
Center for International Policy  
Charity & Security Network  
Demand Progress Education Fund  
Foreign Policy for America  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Human Rights Watch  
Humanity & Inclusion  
MADRE  
Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)  
MPower Change  
Norwegian Refugee Council USA  
Oxfam America  
PAX

Peace Action

Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

Refugees International

U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action (USCPR Action)

Win Without War

Zomia Center