

The Honorable Mike Johnson,
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

February 12, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson:

As you consider legislation to provide support to Israel, we as a group of diverse faith leaders respectfully call for the inclusion of critical, life-saving humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza as part of any Israel aid package that comes to the floor of the House of Representatives. Ending the extraordinary suffering and death of Palestinian civilians is essential to Israel's long-term security and to peace and stability in the region.

We collectively and strongly condemn the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel that took place on October 7, 2023. In response to these brutal attacks, we recognize that Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas and to ensure the safety and security of its people from future acts of terror. We also condemn the brutal mistreatment of hostages by Hamas and call for their immediate and unconditional release so that they may be reunited with their families.

However, as the war between Israel and Hamas continues, we are deeply concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza resulting from innocent civilians being caught in the crossfire and the severe restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid. Since the war began, thousands of civilians have been injured or killed. Countless others have been displaced and forced to flee their homes to avoid harm's way. With limited access to food, water, shelter, electricity, and medical care, those on the ground in Gaza need our support now. Time is of the essence.

On behalf of many faith groups, we stand united in our call to Congress to act immediately to make sure critical supplies and medicine are provided, allowed into Gaza, and delivered to those in need. Such action is crucial to prevent further loss of life and to lay the groundwork for the restoration of peace in which both Israelis and Palestinians can begin to rebuild their lives.

Once again, we respectfully request that any aid package for Israel also include urgently needed, robust humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Anderson, Founding Pastor, Bridgeway Community Church, Columbia, MD
Mr. John Carr, Founder, Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, Georgetown University
Mr. Myal Greene, President, World Relief

Dr. Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)
Rev. Tony Lee, Senior Pastor, Community of Hope AME Church, Hillcrest Heights, MD
Bishop Vashti McKenzie, President and General Secretary, National Council of Churches
Ms. Mary Novak, Director, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director Emeritus, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism
Imam Talib Shareef, President, The Nation's Mosque, Masjid Muhammad
Rev. Adam Taylor, President, Sojourners
Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network