



August 2015

Tell Congress: End the Gaza blockade and promote a lasting peace

One year after last summer's devastating war, the situation in Gaza is dire. According to the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA):

- The 2014 unemployment rate in Gaza averaged 43%.
- Nearly 80% of Gaza's population receives some form of international aid, mostly food assistance.
- Many basic construction materials and other items are defined by Israel as "dual use" (i.e. they could be used for both civilian and military purposes), and their import is restricted.
- Less than 1% of the construction materials needed for rebuilding homes and ongoing housing needs have entered Gaza.
- Gaza's economy is undermined by access restrictions imposed by Israel, including restrictions on exports to the West Bank and Israel, imports to Gaza, and access to farming land in Gaza and fishing waters off its coast. Although recently some of these restrictions have been lifted, "the basic constraints remain in place, preventing a significant improvement in the economy."
- The movement of people is also restricted by Israel – an average of only 449 permit holders per day were allowed to exit via the Erez crossing into Israel during the first five months of 2015. The problem of isolation is increased by restrictions imposed by Egypt along its border with Gaza.

This situation must not continue, and the cycle of violence must not be allowed to repeat itself. Call on Congress today to end the Gaza blockade and promote a lasting peace. Ask your members of Congress to:

- Call for a lifting of the Gaza blockade and an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land.
- Demand accountability for loss of civilian lives and infrastructure last summer by insisting that possible human rights violations by all parties be investigated. Impunity paves the way for future violations.
- Recognize that U.S. diplomatic and financial support enables the occupation. The U.S. provides over \$3 billion per year in military aid to Israel.
- Condition military aid to Israel on its compliance with U.S. law and policy. Questions must be raised about how U.S. military aid to Israel is used –including during the war last summer –to ensure that it is not enabling human rights violations or being used in ways that contradict U.S. policy.

To prevent more bloodshed and to build peace for Israelis and Palestinians, contact your [representative](#) and [senators](#) today.

Sample letter:

Dear Senator/Representative,

I write to you today as a person of faith who is deeply concerned about the dire situation in Gaza one year after the devastating war between Israel and Hamas.

According to the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA):

- The 2014 unemployment rate in Gaza averaged 43% – the highest in the world.
- Nearly 80% of Gaza’s population receives some form of international aid, mostly food assistance.
- Many basic construction materials and other items are defined by Israel as “dual use” (i.e. they could be used for both civilian and military purposes), and their import is restricted.
- Less than 1% of the construction materials needed for rebuilding homes and ongoing housing needs have entered Gaza.
- Gaza’s economy is undermined by access restrictions imposed by Israel, including restrictions on exports to the West Bank and Israel, imports to Gaza, and access to farming land in Gaza and fishing waters off its coast. Although recently some of these restrictions have been lifted, “the basic constraints remain in place, preventing a significant improvement in the economy.”
- The movement of people is also restricted by Israel – an average of only 449 permit holders per day were allowed to exit via the Erez crossing into Israel during the first five months of 2015. The problem of isolation is increased by restrictions imposed by Egypt along its border with Gaza.

I am concerned that if these issues are not addressed, the people of Gaza will continue to suffer and the cycle of violence may well repeat itself to the detriment of both Palestinians and Israelis. For the security and welfare of both peoples, I therefore ask you to:

- Call for a lifting of the Gaza blockade and an end to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land.
- Demand accountability for loss of civilian lives and infrastructure last summer by insisting that possible human rights violations by all parties be investigated. Impunity paves the way for future violations.
- Recognize that U.S. diplomatic and financial support enables the occupation. The U.S. provides over \$3 billion per year in military aid to Israel.
- Condition military aid to Israel on its compliance with U.S. law and policy. Questions must be raised about how U.S. military aid to Israel is used –including during the war last summer —to ensure that it is not enabling human rights violations or being used in ways that contradict U.S. policy.

Thank you for your attention and for your service,