

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to express serious concern about the devastating impact of overly burdensome dual-use restrictions on humanitarian conditions in Gaza. Israel has obligations under U.S. and international law to address the needs of the civilian population and not deny or severely limit entry of items based on a zero-risk approach. We urge you to push for greater transparency and more logical enforcement policies.

Israel faces real security challenges from Hamas and other actors, and we support disarming Hamas and replacing it with an alternative governing entity. However, overly broad and inconsistently enforced restrictions on essential humanitarian goods do not increase Israel's security. They bring additional harm to Palestinian civilians, jeopardize the fragile ceasefire in Gaza, and fuel further instability throughout the Middle East – potentially fomenting anti-Israel sentiment and increasing international backlash.

Humanitarian conditions in Gaza remain dire, despite improvements since the October 2025 ceasefire. Most of the population is displaced and confined to overcrowded areas. Limited access to safe water and waste accumulation is contributing to an ongoing pest and rodent infestation problem,¹ with over 70,000 cases of rodent and ectoparasitic infestations reported between January and April 2026.² This is a public health crisis, and it risks the potential spread of disease.

The recent pest control campaign is a critical first step, but its success depends on sustained supplies rollout and changes in the underlying conditions.³ Israel must allow entry of chemicals and pipes for damaged waste and sanitation facilities, regular pesticide shipments, and heavy lifting equipment for rubbish removal.⁴

This piece of the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Gaza raises broader concerns about the dual-use restriction entry system generally. We're alarmed that Israel heavily restricts and sometimes completely obstructs the entry of essential medical equipment – including ultrasound machines, prosthetic limbs and ventilators⁵ – particularly as 94% of Gaza's hospitals have been damaged

¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-5-june-2026>

² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-17-april-2026>

³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-5-june-2026#pests-rodents-and-sanitation>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c202m54xp0mo>

⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-6-march-2026>

or destroyed⁶ and thousands are in need of immediate medical care.⁷ Ongoing restrictions on fortified tent poles and prefabricated structures⁸ are similarly disturbing, with more than 80% of Gaza's buildings damaged or destroyed, and over 1.7 million people sheltering in makeshift tent camps.⁹

A lack of transparency over what is or is not restricted adds to the problem. The published list of dual-use items is only published in Hebrew¹⁰ and is not available in Arabic or English. It is also incomplete relative to what is obstructed in practice. Commercial traders have been able to import goods that aid groups cannot bring in – leaving essential items inaccessible for Gazans who can't afford commercial prices¹¹ and showing that dual-use security restrictions for humanitarian organizations may be arbitrary. The lack of transparency creates confusion and chaos for aid workers, who report that inconsistent enforcement has blocked even mundane items like pencils, paper, and diapers.¹² And if a supply truck contains any perceived dual-use items, then aid groups report that the entire truck is rejected, further slowing aid into Gaza.¹³

The Trump Administration's 20-point plan promised relief for Palestinian civilians after years of immense suffering and hardship and a path toward regional stability. The ongoing humanitarian crisis and the Israeli government's restrictions that contribute to it are derailing that plan. Legitimate security concerns must not be abused to prevent adequate aid to a civilian population in desperate need.

We urge you to press the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) to immediately publicize a comprehensive list of all dual-use items it intends to restrict, and to facilitate entry of items desperately needed for shelter, basic hygiene, sanitation, and medical care.

We also request responses to the following:

1. Does the State Department have access to the full list of restricted dual-use items, and justifications for each? If so, please share this with Congress.
2. Does the State Department know why items such as ultrasounds, prosthetics, tent poles, flashlights, wheelchairs, tarps, sleeping bags, and portable toilets are classified as dual-use items?¹⁴
3. What does the State Department assess can be removed from the dual-use list so that civilians in Gaza can receive basic necessities?

⁶ <https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns>

⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-15-may-2026>

⁸ <https://gisha.org/en/dual-use-items/>

⁹ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/opt-humanitarian-situation-report-25-may-2026>

¹⁰ <https://exportctrl.mod.gov.il/promaterials/securityexportcontrolact/ab8a71b0-b835-49b6-b5ad-66814635b3d3>

¹¹ <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/perspectives-and-commentaries/six-months-into-gaza-ceasefire-setting-the-record-straight-about-aid/>

¹² <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/perspectives-and-commentaries/six-months-into-gaza-ceasefire-setting-the-record-straight-about-aid/>

¹³ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43593/documents/216534/default/>

¹⁴ <https://gisha.org/en/dual-use-items/>

4. What items can commercial traders bring into Gaza that aid organizations cannot? What is the plan to fix this double standard?
5. What is the process for determining whether an item is deemed dual-use? How often is this reevaluated? Is the determination affected by the requesting entity?
6. Does the State Department independently verify each item's dual-use designation, or does it rely solely on Israeli determinations? If the Department disagrees with a designation, is there a process for seeking its removal?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your reply.

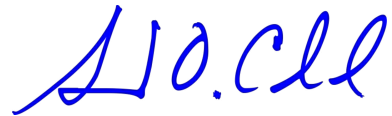
Sincerely,



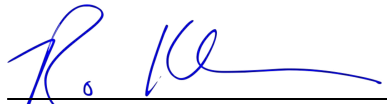
Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



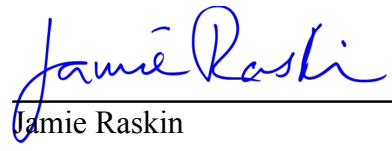
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



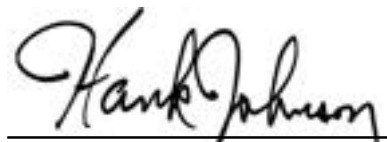
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



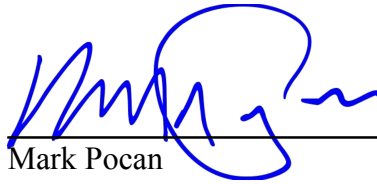
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



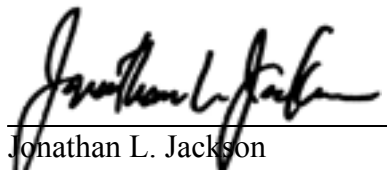
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



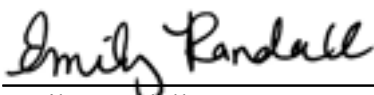
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



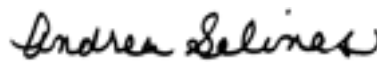
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



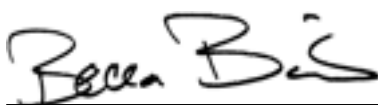
Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



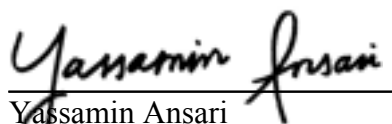
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



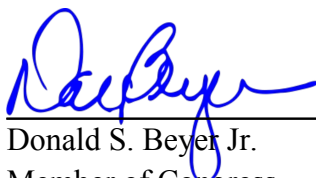
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



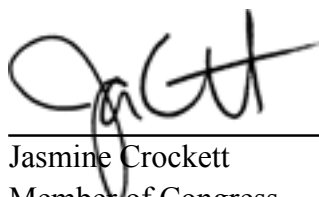
Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



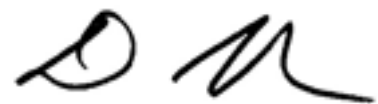
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



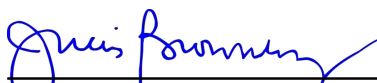
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



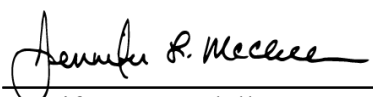
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



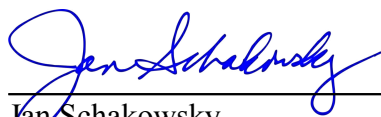
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



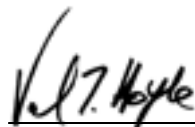
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



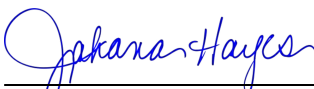
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



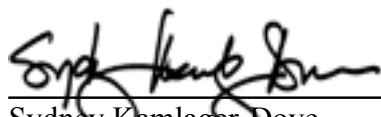
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



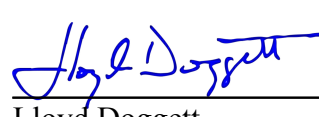
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



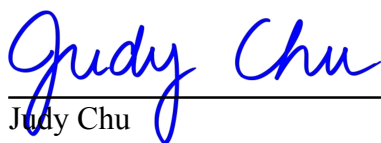
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



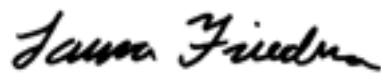
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



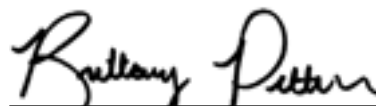
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



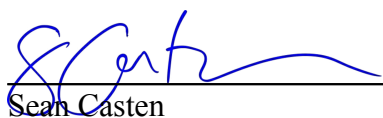
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



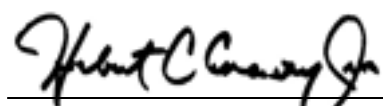
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



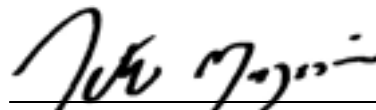
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



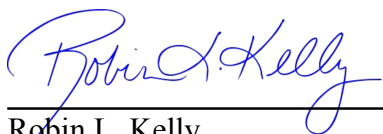
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress