

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write with concern regarding the perilous situation of cancer patients trapped in Gaza without access to appropriate medical treatment. It is imperative that the United States and its regional partners urge the Israeli government to reestablish a medical pathway for cancer patients in Gaza to receive life-saving treatment in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In addition, the United States must ensure that Palestinians are able to rebuild and protect hospitals and medical infrastructure in Gaza.

More than 18,500 Palestinians require urgent medical care that is currently unavailable in Gaza, approximately 11,000 of whom are cancer patients.<sup>1</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 94 percent of Gaza's hospitals have been damaged or destroyed. The near-complete collapse of Gaza's health systems included the destruction of its only specialized cancer treatment facility, the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, which became inoperative early in the war and was subsequently destroyed by the Israeli military on March 21, 2025.<sup>2</sup> Other health facilities have been unable to fill the gap, and access to diagnostic services, chemotherapy, radiation, and most types of surgery is virtually nonexistent.<sup>3</sup> The Israeli government has permitted a limited number of medical evacuations to third countries, but that mechanism has been insufficient to meet the needs of Palestinians in Gaza.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, cancer diagnoses become death sentences in Gaza, where doctors estimate that cancer deaths have tripled since October 2023.<sup>5</sup> An illustrative example is the story of Ghazal, a six-year-old boy who was diagnosed with leukemia. His family requested that he receive a medical evacuation to seek treatment, which can result in survival rates of up to 92 percent for some types of pediatric leukemia.<sup>6</sup> The approval never came. Ghazal died after two months of waiting.

More than 1,200 people have, like Ghazal, died while waiting for evacuation.<sup>7</sup> In November 2025, five Israeli organizations filed a High Court petition with expert affidavits calling these "preventable deaths, nothing less."<sup>8</sup> Despite the overwhelming humanitarian imperative, the Israeli government has largely refused to permit medical evacuations to the West Bank due to "security concerns" since 2023.<sup>9</sup> While the Israeli government has a responsibility to ensure the safety of its residents, it is also obligated under international law to "ensur[e] and maintain...[medical] services, public health and hygiene" for the people of Gaza, insofar as it exercises control over the territory, and to refrain from collective punishment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "[Reported Impact Snapshot | Gaza Strip](#)," May 6, 2026; "['We are dying': Gaza's cancer patients plead for a way out](#)," *UN News*, February 4, 2026.

<sup>2</sup> Emanuel Fabian, "[IDF confirms it blew up Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital in Gaza, says it wasn't in use](#)," *The Times of Israel*, March 21, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization, "[HeRAMS Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza, Infographics](#)," March 2026.

<sup>4</sup> Global Health Cluster, "[Occupied Palestinian Territory Unified Health Dashboard](#)," May 6, 2026.

<sup>5</sup> Mohammad Mansour and Tareq Abu Azzoum, "['We just sit and cry': Gaza's cancer patients die waiting for treatment](#)," *Al Jazeera*, January 9, 2026.

<sup>6</sup> American Cancer Society, "[Prognostic Factors and Survival Rates for Childhood Leukemia](#)," July 22, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, "[UN Geneva Press Briefing](#)," December 12, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Gisha, "[Human Rights Groups Petition Israel's High Court: Immediately Allow Medical Evacuations from Gaza to the West Bank and East Jerusalem](#)," press release, November 26, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Chen Maanit, "[Israel Will Not Allow Gaza Residents to Receive Medical Treatment in West Bank, East Jerusalem Due to 'Security Risks'](#)," *Haaretz*, January 27, 2026.

<sup>10</sup> Michal Feldon et al., "[Reopening the humanitarian corridor from Gaza to the West Bank and East Jerusalem for medical evacuations](#)," *The Lancet Global Health*, Volume 14, Issue 5, May 2026.

Before October 2023, an established medical referral corridor regularly allowed patients from Gaza to seek medical care less than an hour away in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We welcome the news of the first such transfer since the start of the war following an order of the Jerusalem District Court,<sup>11</sup> and urge that the medical corridor now be permanently reestablished to prevent further loss of life.

Hospitals across East Jerusalem and the West Bank stand ready to receive patients. Augusta Victoria Hospital, the only facility providing comprehensive radiation services to Palestinians in the occupied territories, and several West Bank hospitals with oncology departments, possess the capacity to treat every child with cancer in Gaza. With the support of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, Augusta Victoria Hospital can cover all costs related to the transportation and treatment of pediatric leukemia patients.<sup>12</sup> An Israeli humanitarian organization, Gisha, has long handled the logistics of medical evacuations and is prepared to resume operations immediately. The only obstacle between these patients and the treatment they desperately need is the Israeli government's approval of their evacuation requests.

In response to this crisis, we urge the Administration to take the following steps:

1. Engage the Governments of Qatar, Egypt, and Türkiye in a coordinated diplomatic effort to secure medical evacuations for every pediatric cancer patient and their caregivers in Gaza to Augusta Victoria Hospital and other appropriate medical facilities in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
2. Facilitate the reestablishment of the medical corridor between Gaza and East Jerusalem and the West Bank, such that all patients in need of medical evacuation from Gaza may be granted it in accordance with humanitarian principles.
3. Attain assurances from the Israeli government that all patients and caregivers who are evacuated from Gaza will be permitted to return to Gaza when they are able.
4. Ensure that Palestinians are able to rebuild and protect hospitals and medical infrastructure in Gaza.
5. Provide responses to the questions posed in the November 24, 2025 letter sent to you by Senator Markey and Representative Dexter.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We respectfully request a response by June 24, 2026.

Sincerely,



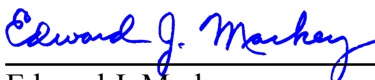
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

<sup>11</sup> Gisha, "[For the first time since the beginning of the war: A cancer patient from the Gaza Strip was permitted to travel for medical treatment in the West Bank](#)," press release, January 12, 2026.

<sup>12</sup> Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, "[Statement of Support for the Work of Augusta Victoria Hospital in Treating Children with Cancer from Gaza](#)," December 17, 2026.



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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



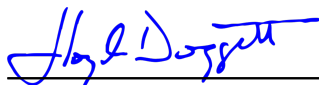
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Peter Welch  
United States Senator



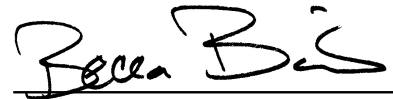
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Dave Min  
Member of Congress



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



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Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



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



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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



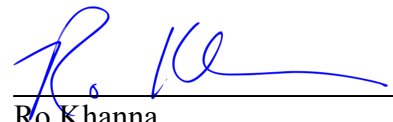
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Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress




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Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress




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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress




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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress




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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress




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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress




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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress




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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress




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Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress




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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress




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Danny K. Davis  
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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress




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Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress




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Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress




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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress




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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



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LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



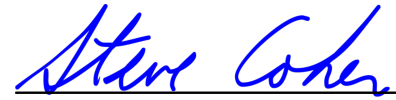
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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



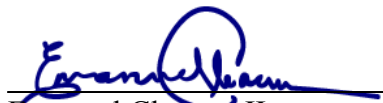
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



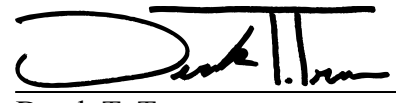
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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



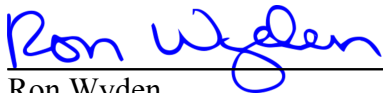
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



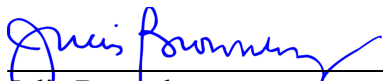
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Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



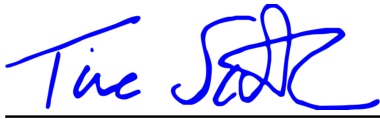
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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



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Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



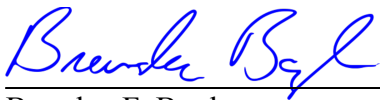
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Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



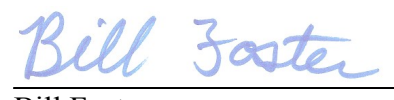
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Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



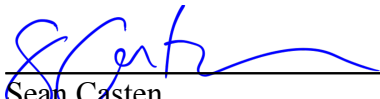
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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



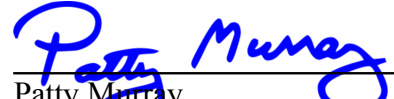
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Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



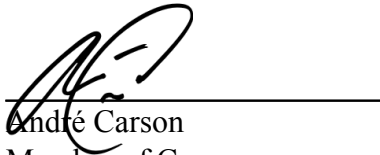
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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



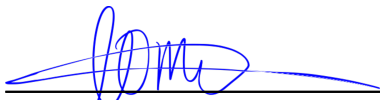
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André Carson  
Member of Congress



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



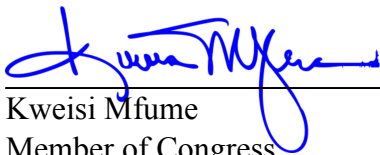
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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



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Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress

*Bernard Sanders*

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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator