

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 11, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 “C” Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken,

We write to you with deep concern regarding the ongoing restrictions on media access to Gaza, which have persisted since the outbreak of hostilities one year ago. It is imperative that the United States urge Israel to allow independent access for U.S. and international journalists, in the interest of transparency, accountability, and the fundamental principle of press freedom.

In July, over 70 media and civil society organizations signed an open letter calling on Israel to grant journalists access to Gaza¹. Yet foreign media remains largely prohibited from entering the region, except for a few controlled trips arranged by the Israeli military. This effective ban on foreign reporting has placed an overwhelming burden on local journalists who are documenting the war they are living through. Tragically, at least 130 journalists have lost their lives since the start of the war, and those who remain face conditions of extreme hardship and danger.²

The International Federation of Journalists has reported that the mortality rate for media workers in Gaza is over 10 percent³. Seventy-five percent of all reporters killed worldwide in 2023 lost their lives between October 7 and the end of the year.⁴ In December 2023, just two months into the conflict, the Committee to Protect Journalists declared Gaza the “most dangerous ever” war zone for reporters.⁵ These staggering statistics underscore the critical importance of allowing independent journalists to document and report from the ground.

The restrictions on media reporting have created significant challenges in obtaining accurate, verifiable information from Gaza, leading to increased skepticism about the limited reports that do emerge. At a time when reliable information is more critical than ever, the

¹ <https://cpj.org/2024/07/media-organizations-urge-israel-to-open-access-to-gaza/#full-letter-below>

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/23/israel-is-deliberately-targeting-journalists-in-gaza-experts#:~:text=Seventy%2Dfive%20percent%20of%20all%20most%20dangerous%20ever%E2%80%9D%20for%20reporters.>

³ <https://www.ifj.org/war-in-gaza>

⁴ <https://cpj.org/2024/02/israel-gaza-war-propelled-journalist-killings-to-near-record-high/#:~:text=In%20December%202023%2C%20CPJ%20reported,Chief%20Executive%20Officer%20Jodie%20Ginsberg.>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-war-most-dangerous-ever-journalists-says-rights-group-2023-12-21/>

restrictions on foreign reporting undermine the very foundation of press freedom and democratic accountability.

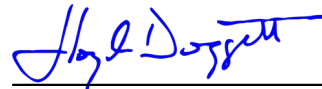
We urge the administration to take immediate action to advocate for unrestricted, independent media access to Gaza. A free press is essential to ensuring that the world can bear witness to the realities on the ground and hold all parties accountable.

We thank you for your attention to this critical issue and look forward to your leadership in upholding the principles of press freedom and human rights.

Sincerely,



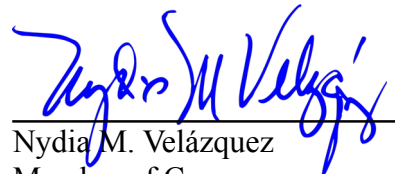
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



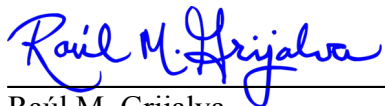
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



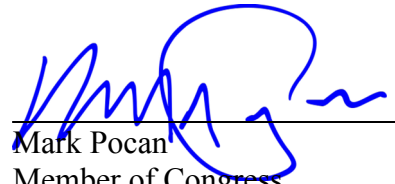
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
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Maxine Waters
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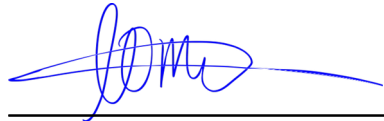
Rashida Tlaib
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



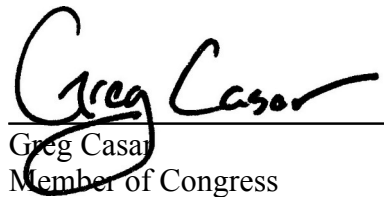
Seth Magaziner
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
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Greg Casar
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John Garamendi
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Gerald E. Connolly
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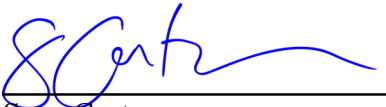
J. Luis Correa
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Pramila Jayapal
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Veronica Escobar
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Sean Casten
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Chellie Pingree
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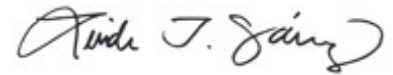
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



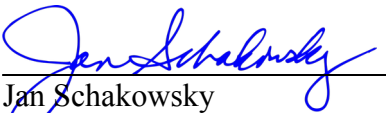
Cori Bush
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Jamie Raskin
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Jan Schakowsky
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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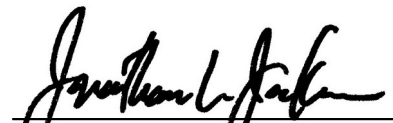
Daniel T. Kildee
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Danny K. Davis
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Jonathan L. Jackson
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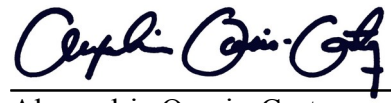
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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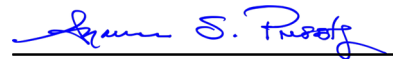
Seth Moulton
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Paul D. Tonko
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Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



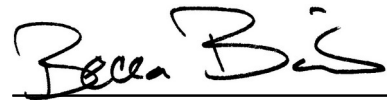
Al Green
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Summer L. Lee
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Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



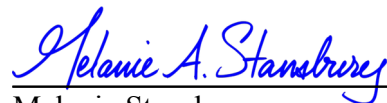
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



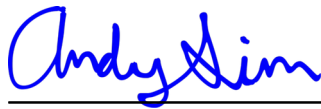
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



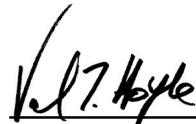
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress




Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



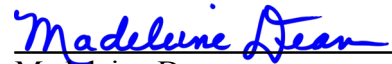
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



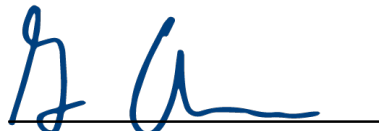
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



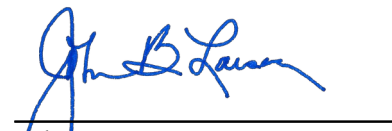
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



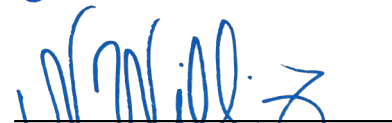
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John B. Larson
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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Nikema Williams
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