

May 30, 2023

Some Members of the Jewish
Community of Portland, Oregon

Congressman Earl Blumenauer
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Blumenauer,

We write as Jews inspired by the prophetic injunctions to pursue justice and who are apprehensive about the futures of Israel/Palestine and our people. We appreciate that you share our concerns for the people suffering from the brutal Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and from the discrimination and abuse of Israel's Jewish supremacist laws and the new extremist Netanyahu coalition government. However, we believe that our representatives in the US House and Senate should move beyond expressions of concern to concrete actions.

We salute your bold leadership in many arenas of the progressive agenda. But we are disappointed that you did not sign onto the letter circulated by Senator Bernie Sanders and Congressman Jamaal Bowman addressing the urgent issues in Israel/Palestine. This was a modest but significant step in the direction recognizing our country's role in the worsening human rights abuses carried out by the state of Israel. We hoped that you would have joined your friend Rep. Rashida Tlaib and the other signers.

But there is another opportunity. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN 04) has reintroduced her *Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act* for the 118th Congress. The bill has 16 original co-sponsors and is supported by over 75 civil society groups. We ask you to join them as a cosponsor of this legislation.

You expressed your pleasure that people can once again safely swim off the coast of Gaza. But surely this is an empty consolation given the dire state of Gaza's far more pressing issue of drinking water. The Summer 2022 Anera Report "Before the Taps Run Dry" documents the extreme existential crisis that Gazans face due to, among other factors,

overextraction from the coastal aquifer leading to saltwater intrusion, uncontrolled pollution, and agricultural runoff. 96% of that aquifer is unusable for drinking water.

Even more pressing today, however, is the dire threat posed by Israel's current extreme racist and radically antidemocratic government. Although there is some hope in the unprecedented mass demonstrations opposing some of the government's more extreme antidemocratic initiatives inspired by its openly fascist elements, the broad exclusion from those protests of any mention of the occupation or discrimination against non-Jewish citizens of Israel prevents them from confronting the underlying inequality within Israeli society or demanding an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

It is well past the time when mere concern is enough. It is time to enforce the US laws that bar military support for regimes that violate human rights and maintain brutal occupations. We look forward to hearing your plans for joining these efforts.

Regards,

Rabbi Benjamin Barnett
Rabbi Joseph Wolf
Lee Gordon
Joel Beinin
John Blank
Melisa Crosby
Carol Landsman
Carol Mazer
David Newman
William Singer (10)
Randolph Splitter
Carla Basom
Phil Houston Goldsmith
Sandy Polishuk
Yehudah Winter
Ron Bloom
Susan J Lazareck
Karen LaMorticella
Gerson Robboy

Johanna Brenner (20)
Beth Kaye
Laura Orgel
Peter Nielsen
Kathryn Gordon
Julia Lager Mesulam
Emma Lugo
Harriet Cooke
Miriam Beinin
Stephen Auerbach
Jan DeWeese (30)
Robbin Isaacson DeWeese
Kate Farrell
Betsy Zucker
Marjorie Walters
Bill Farver
Marian Rhys
Ruth Roberts
John Linder

Jackie Brookman
Martin Lahr (40)
Kevin Howard
Tara Anderson
Michael Heumann
Sally Markowitz
Carol Gelfer
Joe Sullivan
Jamie Meyers
Sally J. Goldman
Julia Ford
Steve Goldberg (50)
Bill Resnick
Shelley Sobel
Bill Kwitman
Jeff Hammarlund
James Ofsink
Gina Herrmann
Barbara Ruben
Dale Oller
Frances Payne Adler
Karen Sherman (60)
James Calcagno

Jennifer Calcagno
Rachel McCarthy
Karen Rash-Gitner
Richard Goldenberg
Karen St. Clair
Diane Lund
Michael Murikant
Julie Walcer
Lois Bronfman (70)
Karen Mintzner
David Lewis
Betty Reiss
Jacob Reiss
Natalie Lerner
Rebecca Chiao
Susan Abrams
Marvin Rosen, MD
Sherry Archer
Judy Heumann (80)
Buff Medb Neretin
Jodi Zeisel
Mitchell Turker