

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin:

In response to the massacre in Israel committed by Hamas and the ensuing war, we write today to emphasize the importance of expediting Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) aid to Israel.

Israel requires our unequivocal support as they respond to the terror and unconscionable attack carried out by Hamas terrorists. Israel must urgently strengthen their ability to deter Iran's dedicated support for terrorist groups across the Middle East—which we know extends directly to Hamas and Hezbollah. You recently stated that “the message that I bring to Israel is this—you may be strong enough on your own to defend yourself, but as long as America exists you will never, ever have to.”¹ Now is the time to deliver on this promise and reinforce that our commitments are iron-clad.

In 2016, the U.S. and Israel signed the third 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on military aid, which extends through fiscal year 2028 and pledges that the U.S. will provide \$38 billion in military aid to Israel—the largest MOU between our two countries since 1999.² Under this MOU, Congress authorized \$520 million for joint US-Israel defense programs in the annual National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2023.³

U.S. military aid to Israel covers various U.S. weapons systems and missile defense programs. These platforms include combat aircraft such as the F-35, the CH-53K heavy lift helicopter, and the KC-46A multirole tanker. We continue to pursue U.S.-Israeli missile defense projects that are accelerated by our co-development, co-production, and technology sharing frameworks for Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow II, Arrow III, and next generation defense systems. New solutions like shared counter-UAS projects also merit urgent support. In recent years, members of Congress have repeatedly called for the expedited delivery of approved sales and weapons transfers to Israel to improve the country's ability to counter Iranian aggression, both direct and via proxies.⁴

Congress recognizes that the FMS process of the U.S. is not ready to meet the challenges presented by concentrated, evil, and exploitative adversaries that are aligning against democratic nations. China, Russia, Iran—and the terrorist and proxy groups they support—will recognize and take advantage of the gaps that our process failures create for our friends and allies around the world.

¹ [Blinken, in Israel, says more Americans killed, vows solidarity 'always' \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/story/Blinken-in-Israel-says-more-Americans-killed-vows-solidarity-always)

² [FACT SHEET: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel | whitehouse.gov \(archives.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/archives/2016/08/02/FACT-SHEET-Memorandum-of-Understanding-Reached-with-Israel/)

³ [H.R.7776 - 117th Congress \(2021-2022\): James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/117/records/house/7776)

⁴ [politico.com/f/?id=00000180-1e8b-d00d-a3c6-bfbbcef20000](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000180-1e8b-d00d-a3c6-bfbbcef20000)

We recognize that the State Department released “FMS 2023” as a 10-point plan of action to improve the Department’s oversight of the FMS process in May of this year.⁵ Much of the attention of this plan is on resolving and preventing future backlogged weapons sales, such as those for Taiwan. The State Department and Defense Department must now confront the urgent need to expedite the provisioning of FMS cases that are currently on track for Israel. As such, we are requesting that you take the following actions:

1. Record and relay to Congress all actions taken to shorten the timelines for the delivery of FMS cases to Israel—in whole or in part—within the next 12 months.
2. Record and relay to Congress any industrial capacity shortfalls identified as barriers to expediting defense article delivery for Israel and a cost estimate and timeline for resolving the shortfall, where relevant.
3. Identify and alert Congress of any new impediments in terms of contract design, authority restrictions, production line prioritization, or other relevant issues, that impact the ability of the U.S. to expedite the delivery of defense articles or services to Israel over the next 12 months.

Congress is prepared to work with you to take bipartisan and urgent action to bolster the security of Israel in the near-term. However, we recognize that the threats to Israel will persist. We must improve our ability to deliver military aid when it is needed most.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Mark Alford
Member of Congress



Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

⁵ [FMS 2023: Retooling Foreign Military Sales for An Age of Strategic Competition - United States Department of State](#)



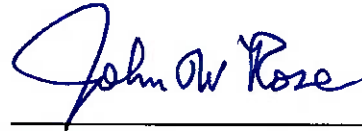
Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



Charles J. "Chuck"
Fleischmann
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



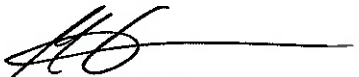
John Rose
Member of Congress



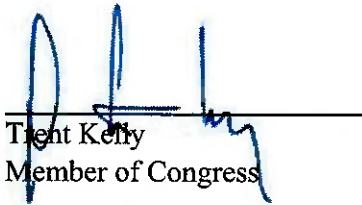
David Kustoff
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



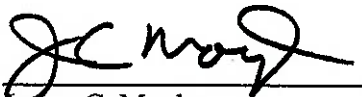
Mike Gallagher
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Trent Kelly
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Mike Garcia
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James C. Moylan
Member of Congress



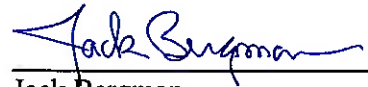
Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



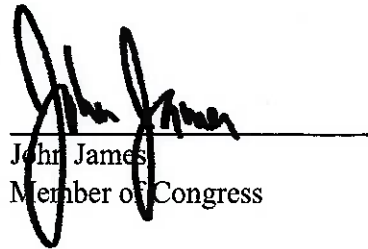
Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
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Michael Waltz
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John James
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Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
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Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



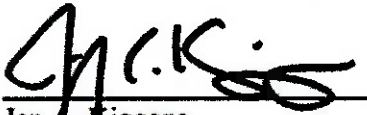
Dale W. Strong
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Carlos A. Gimenez
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Brad Finstad
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Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



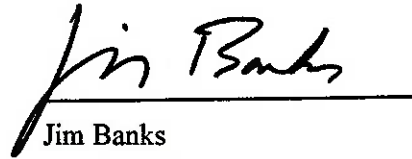
Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



Lisa C. McClain
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Jake LaTurner
Member of Congress

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Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Marcus J. Molinaro
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Ken Calvert
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