August 29, 2023

The Honorable James Risch Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Risch:

We write to respectfully request that you release the hold placed on the $75 million in previously appropriated congressional funding in the FY2023 State, Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which is designated for the provision of food assistance to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

If these funds are not obligated shortly the UNRWA food pipeline could break and over a million Palestinian refugees in Gaza, including almost half a million children, could go hungry. This will create a humanitarian tragedy and poses a huge risk to regional security.

In Gaza, Palestinian refugees and vulnerable populations rely on food assistance from UNRWA or the World Food Programme (WFP). Despite this assistance, severe food insecurity continues to rise – now over 40% people in Gaza are severely food insecure.

Food insecurity in Gaza is already at a tipping point following the WFP’s decision to reduce assistance from 300,000 Gazans down to 100,000 - necessitated by that agency’s overall funding shortage.

Helping to assure the provision of food assistance to refugees in need is yet another reflection of American values as well as in diplomatic and security interests of the United States.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and hope you will act swiftly.

Sincerely,

André Carson
Member of Congress

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Becca Balint
Member of Congress

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
United States Senator
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

David J. Trone
Member of Congress

CC:  The Honorable Michael McCaul Chairman
      House Foreign Affairs Committee
      2170 Rayburn House Office Building
      Washington, DC 20515

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