

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 31, 2014

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General of the United Nations
United Nations
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

We write to express our profound concern about the response of the United Nations Human Rights Council to the recent tragic events in Israel and Gaza. As Members of the United States Senate, we are chagrined that the Human Rights Council has taken a biased approach—criticizing Israel’s actions while failing to condemn Hamas’ brutal tactics including the use of Palestinian civilians as human shields.

Last Wednesday, the Human Rights Council convened a special session on Gaza and voted to establish a Commission of Inquiry into Israel’s actions during the current conflict. The fact that there was no call for an investigation into actions by Hamas—including indiscriminate and deliberate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and intentionally putting Palestinians in harm’s way—is clearly irresponsible. The Human Rights Council’s decision was wholly unacceptable as it turned a blind eye to Hamas’ brazen and depraved use of civilians as human shields, the tunnels it has built to cause mayhem in Israel, and its deliberate targeting of civilians.

In addition, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay accused Israel of “disregard for international humanitarian law and for the right to life” and argued that there was a “strong possibility” Israeli actions “could amount to war crimes.” At the same time, she failed to specifically acknowledge violations of international humanitarian law by Hamas for recklessly endangering the safety of Palestinian men, women, and children as a means to deter Israeli attacks. Such actions are a blatant violation of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions and reinforce why the United States and the European Union have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.

We are deeply troubled by these events. Tragically, such a one-sided approach has inflamed tensions and fueled distrust. This clearly political and biased agenda is not just unproductive—it is destructive.

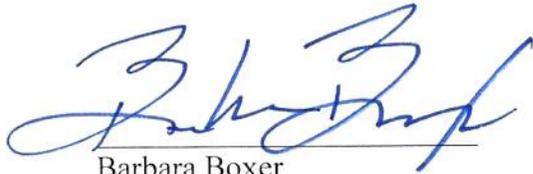
Over the past two weeks, Hamas has put Palestinians in danger, refused to adhere to multiple cease-fire agreements, and launched more than 2,000 rockets into Israel. What country could sit idly by without responding? Israel has a right to defend itself against these vicious attacks and has worked assiduously to minimize civilian casualties by warning Gaza residents of impending air strikes.

The fact that Israel has effective defenses against the rockets aimed at its citizens is no excuse to overlook Hamas’ hostile behavior. The United Nations has an obligation to

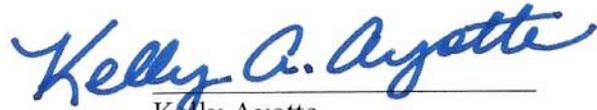
unequivocally condemn any and all actions that endanger the lives of civilians. Anything less damages any meaningful efforts to achieve a resolution to this conflict.

We look forward to you speaking out clearly on this important matter.

Sincerely,



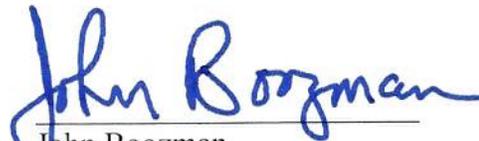
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



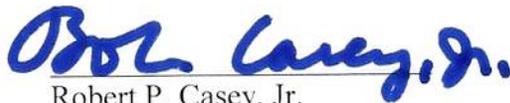
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United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
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Ted Cruz
United States Senator



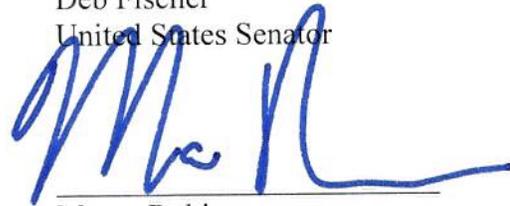
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



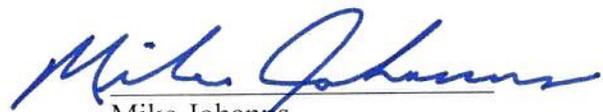
Debbie Stabenow
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Marco Rubio
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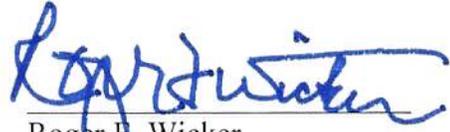
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United States Senator



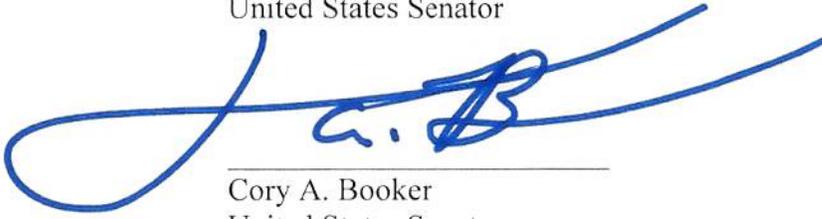
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Barbara A. Mikulski
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Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



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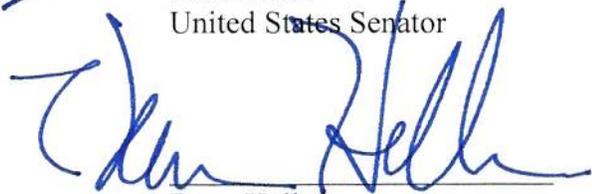
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United States Senator



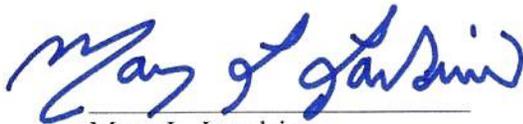
Dean Heller
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Mark R. Warner
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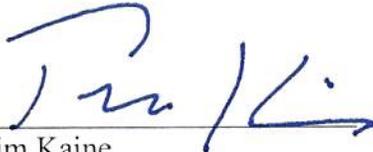
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Tim Kaine
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Tom Coburn
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United States Senator



Lindsey Graham
United States Senator



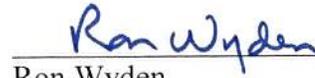
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United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



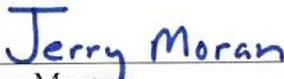
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United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator