

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Kerry:

We write to urge the administration and the State Department to redouble your efforts to urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to come to a cease-fire agreement. The United States can help save Israeli and Palestinian lives by using all diplomatic leverage to work vigorously with U.S. allies to urge for an end to the violence. Media reports indicate that the parties were close to a cease-fire, however no agreement has been reached and violence persists. We commend efforts to facilitate a cease-fire and support Israel's willingness to agree to the terms of the agreement. We urge the Administration to continue its efforts to facilitate an agreement that will engage and garner support from all parties involved in this cycle of violence.

As you know, this week the first Israeli citizen was killed by a rocket fired from Gaza, and many are living in fear and being forced to routinely seek shelter while Hamas continues indiscriminately launching thousands of rockets into Israel. Since July, 226 Palestinians have been killed—a majority of them civilians. More than 20,000 have been displaced from their homes and lack food, water and medicine. Given that Gaza is densely populated and children make up fifty percent of the population, many children have been injured and killed.

Past experience indicates that the current conflict will likely end with a new cease-fire. Ground troops, air strikes, and rockets do not lead to permanent peace in the Middle East. The United States government, together with international partners, must redouble our efforts to urge all parties to avoid further loss of life on both sides by coming to a cease-fire.

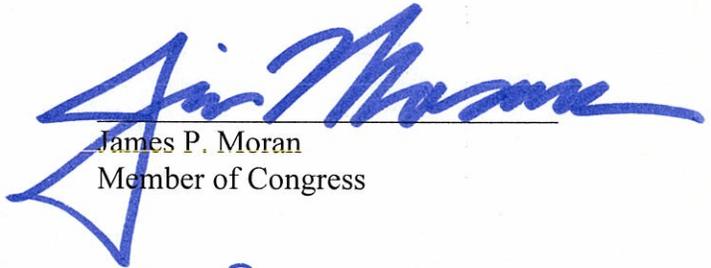
The relative calm that existed during Secretary Kerry's recent diplomatic talks between Israel and Palestine shows that engaging in dialogue is the first step towards stopping the violence. Additional diplomacy is necessary to save lives and create lasting peace. Finally, the current confrontation proves that a final status agreement in which both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security is urgent and necessary.

Thank you and Secretary Kerry for your recent efforts in this regard.

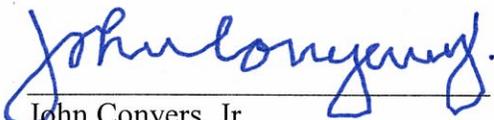
Sincerely,



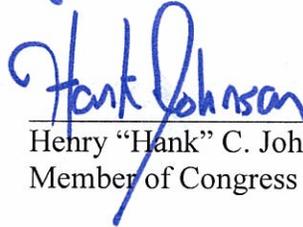
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Henry "Hank" C. Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress