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Congress of the United States
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THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

October 25, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I write today to express my support for your current efforts in working with Israel, Egypt, and the United Nations to reopen Rafah crossing to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and to allow for the safe exit of civilians, including American citizens, in Gaza. Saturday's reopening of the border allowed 20 trucks of much-needed aid to enter Gaza, but it is critical that American citizens be allowed out of Gaza, and more aid be allowed into Gaza through Rafah as swiftly as possible to support the civilian population, while ensuring the aid does not reach Hamas. I also support your condemnation of Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel and your continued efforts to support Israel's security.

However, I am specifically writing today to draw your attention to my constituents and their families who are currently in unsafe situations, and who need our immediate help to safely evacuate. During the past two weeks, my office and I have been working in close coordination with the State Department regarding several of my constituents' family members who were in Israel and who continue to be in Gaza, some of whom have been waiting at Rafah crossing for almost two weeks. Specifically, when Hamas launched its deadly terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, Emilee Abuhamad Rauschenberger—an Elgin, IL native—traveled across Gaza with her husband and five children aged 4-13 to Rafah crossing. Emilee is the niece of Carol Rauschenberger, my current constituent and an Elgin City Councilperson. The family was in Gaza to visit the family of Emilee's husband, Mohammed Abu Hamad, on an olive tree farm in Abasan Al-Kabira when they received an Israeli Defense Forces warning that their compound was in the blast area of a bombing campaign. The family packed up on October 9 and moved through four different safe-houses, waiting for Rafah border to open. Through Emilee's U.S.-based family, my office has received unsettling photos of the neighborhood where Emilee, Mohammed, and their five young children are taking shelter. Emilee and her five children have dual citizenship between the U.S. and the United Kingdom, and her husband is a UK citizen. Though Rafah was opened to allow some humanitarian aid in, the crossing is still closed to Americans and civilians trying to leave, and I am extremely concerned for their safety and well-being. I urge you to continue to work to bring my constituents' family members and others home.

The Rauschenberger-Abu Hamad family are among the many individuals that my office has been working to help in Gaza and Israel. My constituents also have family members in Gaza who are in great need of humanitarian aid. I welcome the news that the State Department has worked with Egypt, Israel, and the UN to allow some aid to go through Rafah, and I urge you to work to ensure additional aid that is on standby at the Egyptian side of Rafah be allowed to enter soon as possible.

I further support the efforts the Biden Administration is undertaking to secure the release of hostages, including American citizens, taken by Hamas. I was heartened by the release of Natalie and Judith Ranaan—who are from Evanston, IL— on Friday, and the release of Nurit Yitzhak and Yocheved Lifshitz yesterday. I urge you to continue your efforts to ensure the safe exit of Americans, hostages, and other civilians in Israel and Gaza who wish to depart.

Thank you for your efforts and leadership in this critical matter. I stand ready and eager to assist as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Raja Krishnamoorthi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Raja" being more prominent and the last name "Krishnamoorthi" following in a continuous script.

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress