

## **RE: Request for Urgent Humanitarian Protections for Palestinians**

January xx, 2024

Dear President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to request that all humanitarian options are made immediately available to address the critically urgent and deadly humanitarian crisis in Palestine, including Gaza, and throughout the West Bank. We write with great urgency out of deep concern for the safety and lives of individuals who have been repeatedly victimized by daily bombardments, mass expulsions, and war crimes.

U.S. Citizens and lawful permanent residents with family members experiencing great violence and danger in Gaza and the West Bank need your urgent assistance and support. Implementing the Department of State Crisis Intake Form is welcomed, yet has proven to be limited in its impact. More is needed to directly ensure the protection and safety of Palestinian civilians who are facing bombardment, expulsion, and a humanitarian crisis.

The U.S. must lead with affirmative steps to ensure that the loved ones of U.S. Citizens (USCs) and Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) have immediate access to legal pathways and humanitarian relief to ensure safety and reunification. This can only be done with your leadership. Since the beginning of the current war on the Palestinian people, over 1.2 million Palestinians have been displaced, and over 23,000 Palestinians have been murdered, including more than 9,600 Palestinian children. It is estimated that over 8,000 civilians remain trapped under the rubble and destruction of homes and neighborhoods in Gaza. According to the [WHO](#)<sup>1</sup>, [UNRWA](#)<sup>2</sup>, [MSF](#)<sup>3</sup>, [ICRC](#)<sup>4</sup>, and several other international organizations, a human catastrophe is

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO). "WHO calls for protection of humanitarian space in Gaza following serious incidents in high-risk mission to transfer patients, deliver health supplies." WHO, 12 December, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-12-2023-who-calls-for-protection-of-humanitarian-space-in-gaza-following-serious-incident-in-high-risk-mission-to-transfer-patients-deliver-health-supplies>.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). "Remarks by UNRWA Commissioner-General Phillippe Lazzarini at Geneva Press Conference." UNRWA, 14 December, 2023, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/remarks-unrwa-commissioner-general-philippe-lazzarini-geneva-press>.

<sup>3</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). "Inside Gaza: Staying alive is only a matter of luck." MSF, December 18th, 2023, <https://www.msf.org/inside-gaza-staying-alive-only-matter-luck>.

<sup>4</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "[Israel and the occupied territories: President of the ICRC arrives in Gaza, calls for the protection of civilians](#)." ICRC, 4th December, 2023,

imminent. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, as of October 31st, 46 generations of Palestinians have been wiped out—meaning, their family lineages have been removed from the public registry.<sup>5</sup> The Department of State has deemed the entire region of Palestine to be unsafe for U.S. citizens and their family members in a series of Travel Warnings as well.<sup>6</sup>

We urge the Administration to consider and implement all-of-government action to provide refuge for people impacted by the conflict. We urge the administration to immediately grant Humanitarian Parole (HP) to those seeking the benefit.

Humanitarian parole for the above-identified categories of individuals would allow families experiencing extreme hardship to find temporary relief and refuge through immediate entry into the United States.

For humanitarian parole to be meaningful for the people described above, we strongly urge the Administration to take action on the following requests in conjunction with HP:

1. Expedite the processing of HP applications for applicants; and
2. Include HP applicants' names on the evacuation list so that they may exit Gaza and wait for their applications to be processed in safety; and
3. Include the names of all beneficiaries on I-130 petitions filed by USCIs and LPRs for loved ones in Gaza and the West Bank on the evacuation List allowing for immediate authorized safe passage into Egypt and family reunification; and
4. Provide for a blanket fee waiver for all humanitarian parole applicants; and
5. Allow for document flexibilities for individuals whose personal identity documents; and biographic documents, and passports may have been destroyed or lost in the bombings;
6. Facilitate transportation and travel logistics from the Rafah crossing to the US Embassy in Cairo; and
7. Facilitate and provide Arabic language translation services to assist and support applicants as they interface with US Embassy staff and officials; and
8. Designate staff at the US Embassy in Cairo or any US Consulate in the world where families may safely reach to be processed for humanitarian parole; and
9. Appoint a special coordinator to help streamline the Administration's efforts to provide humanitarian protections for Palestinians in the United States and abroad.

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<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/israel-and-occupied-territories-president-icrc-arrives-gaza#:~:text=%22The%20level%20of%20human%20suffering,alleviate%20the%20desperate%20humanitarian%20situation>.

<sup>5</sup> Time Magazine. "Entire Families Have Been 'Wiped Out' by Israeli Airstrikes, Human Rights Group Says." Time Magazine, 31 October, 2003, <https://time.com/6330210/israel-hamas-gaza-families-amnesty-international/>.

<sup>6</sup>United States Department of State. "December 1st, 2023 Information for U.S. Citizens in the Middle East." United States Department of State. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/situation-in-israel-2023.html#:~:text=U.S.%20citizens%20should%20heed%20the,Gaza%20and%20the%20Gaza%20periphery>.



By offering humanitarian parole, the Administration would demonstrate a commitment to upholding human dignity and providing much-needed assistance to individuals facing extraordinary circumstances during this war. This act of compassion aligns with President Biden's and Vice President Harris' public statements that international human rights law and Palestinians' lives must be respected and protected. These humanitarian protection programs have long-standing roots and precedent in international law, including the recent implementation of the remarkably impactful U4U Uniting 4 Ukraine program.

We request the Administration's prompt attention and action on this matter. The alleviation of suffering and provision of aid to those in need is a testament to our shared humanity and commitment to justice. We urge the Administration to consider this request with utmost compassion and urgency.

Sincerely,

Abed Ayoub  
Executive Director  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

**Signatories:**