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Dear Friend,

Thank you for writing me about the bloody terrorist operation conducted by Hamas against Israeli civilians beginning on Saturday, October 7th, the deepening humanitarian disaster in Gaza, and the threat of spreading violence in the region. I appreciate and share your fundamental commitment to the human rights and security of all Israeli and Palestinian civilians, and believe we must do everything in our power to protect life and peace on both sides of the border and to surge humanitarian assistance to the besieged population of the Gaza Strip.

The terrorist assault conducted by Hamas fighters against Israeli civilians last week constitutes a mass war crime, a shocking crime against humanity, an illegal invasion of a sovereign country, and the most murderous assault on Jewish civilians since the Holocaust. More than 1,300 Israelis were slaughtered in these appalling terror attacks. Israel has the indisputable right under international law to engage in military self-defense against this explosion of terrorist violence. We must also continue to demand, and work for, the immediate safe return of the nearly 200 hostages, among them both Israelis and Americans, who are still being held captive by Hamas terrorists in Gaza today.

Any just war undertaken in self-defense must be prosecuted justly, according to international and humanitarian law, the central purpose of which is the protection of civilian life. The more than two million Palestinians essentially trapped in miserable and vulnerable conditions with dwindling food, water and medical supplies in the densely packed Gaza Strip, nearly half of whom are children, have a right to be kept safe from the terrorist violence of Hamas and from the Israeli military campaign launched in response to it. The Palestinian people are not responsible for the criminal actions of Hamas terrorists, but there have already been more than 3,300 lives lost in Gaza in this first week of aerial attacks, and Israel's anticipated ground invasion has not even begun. I strongly support Secretary Blinken's recent work to negotiate a plan with Israel to get humanitarian aid into Gaza and to restore access to the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, and medicine, and in the days ahead I will continue to advocate for the protection of all civilians in the region. We must forcefully reject all notions of mass guilt, collective punishment and deliberate sacrifice of civilian life for military or ideological purposes. You can read my full statement, published on October 14th, here: <https://raskin.house.gov/2023/10/statement-by-congressman-jamie-raskin-the-terrorist-attacks-on-israel-israel-s-right-of-self-defense-the-laws-of-war-hostage-taking-and-the-protection-of-two-million-palestinian-civilians-in-gaza>

I believe we must do everything in our power to stop the terrorist killers in Hamas, secure the safe and immediate return of all 200 hostages being held in Gaza, and end the spiraling violence against civilians in Israel and the Gaza Strip. The Biden Administration is forcefully advocating for all of these goals and is deploying diplomatic, military, and economic means to achieve them. In Congress, we should be doing whatever we can to support the Biden Administration in its efforts to protect civilian life, end Hamas terror, and bring about not just rapid cessation of military hostilities but enduring peace and security to both Israelis and Palestinians. The alternative is an unthinkable descent into regional war and chaos.

All of us must work however we can for peace and for a future of mutual security, human rights and decency for the people of Israel, Gaza and the Middle East. Thank you again for sharing your passionate and lucid views with me, and please stay in close touch.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" and last name "Raskin" clearly legible.

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

P.S. You may sign up for my e-newsletter at <https://raskin.house.gov/newsletter-subscription> to receive key legislative and district updates.