

Durbin, Duckworth Join Senate Colleagues In Statement Regarding Humanitarian Aid To Civilians In Gaza

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CHICAGO – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, together with U.S. Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA), Mark R. Warner (D-VA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Peter Welch (D-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ed Markey (D-MA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), released the following statement:

“The tragic war in Gaza, initiated by Hamas terrorist attacks on innocent civilians on October 7, is causing heartbreaking suffering among Israelis, Palestinians and citizens of other nations living in the region.

“Israel has the right and obligation to defend itself against Hamas, whose leadership continues to state clearly that their goal is the complete annihilation of Israel. Israel also has the obligation, pursuant to international law, to conduct that defense in such a way as to minimize harm to civilians and allow humanitarian aid to reach those who are suffering. We acknowledge the increased burden that this necessarily places on Israel to accomplish these obligations.

“Hamas’s horrific actions cannot be ascribed to all Palestinians. Indeed, Palestinian residents of Gaza have often been victimized by Hamas.

“As Senators, we have been closely monitoring the war in Gaza and believe that much more must be done to protect civilian life. We have been in ongoing dialogue with government officials in the United States, Israel and other nations in the region. We have communicated extensively with international aid officials doing work in Gaza, including those working together with the U.S. Agency for International Development. And we have talked at length with our own constituents who have family and friends in the region.

“The failure to adequately protect non-combatant civilians risks dramatic escalation of the conflict in the region and imposes severe damage on prospects for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. Based on the consensus opinion of U.S. and international aid officials, it is nearly impossible to deliver sufficient humanitarian aid to protect civilian life under current conditions.

“Thus, we join President Biden in his call for a short-term cessation of hostilities that pose high-risk to civilians, aid workers or humanitarian aid delivery in Gaza, in order to accomplish three goals:

1. Successful delivery of needed humanitarian aid to civilians under strict and necessary oversight
2. Increased focus on the release of all hostages kidnapped on October 7
3. Opportunity for broader discussion amongst Israeli and Palestinian leadership, together with regional and global partners, about long-term strategies to reduce decades-long conflict in the region.”