

# **Durbin Calls To Reopen Gaza Hospitals Under Neutral Third Party As Israel-Hamas Reach A Temporary Ceasefire Deal And Hostage Release**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor on the need to reopen key Gaza hospitals under the supervision of a credible, neutral third party in order to help the innocent civilians caught in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. During his speech, Durbin said he planned to speak with Secretary General António Guterres about implementing this proposal. He also called on Congress to pass President Biden’s emergency supplemental request, which includes emergency funds for Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific, and humanitarian crises.

Durbin began his speech by commenting on the agreement reached between Israel and Hamas to release hostages currently being held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip during a temporary long ceasefire.

Durbin said, “These innocent should never have been taken in the first place... This includes a young man with ties to my state, Hersch Goldberg-Polin, who was horribly injured during the October 7 attack and subsequently taken hostage... The agreement to release some of the hostages included a pause in fighting to allow for desperately needed humanitarian supplies to help innocent Palestinian civilians. We must remind ourselves that it is the Hamas terrorism we want to eradicate. Unfortunately, thousands of Palestinian people are being caught in the cross fires. I hope we can build upon this deal to negotiate the release of the remaining hostages, bring an end to the violence in a way that removes Hamas from power, allows for the rebuilding of Gaza, and provides real progress toward a viable two-state solution. A two-state solution will require political leadership and courage from all parties.”

Durbin applauded President Biden’s comments that also called for a two-state solution in which he said, “a two-state solution is the only way to ensure the long-term security of both the Israeli and Palestinian people.”

Durbin then reflected on the horrific conditions in Gaza, particularly in hospitals, which prompted Durbin’s proposal to reopen hospitals under a neutral third party, such as the UN.

“Some of you may have heard me speak a few weeks ago about what Chicago area volunteer doctors described as conditions in some of the besieged hospitals: Amputations of the limbs of children without anesthesia, relying only on Tylenol and vinegar instead of disinfectants to clean and heal wounds... Needs have only grown since then, with dozens of premature babies recently evacuated to Egypt for life-saving care. All of this was, of course, complicated by Hamas’s depraved use of hospitals to mask its activities. Let’s be clear: Innocent Palestinians are also hostage to Hamas, whose members clearly don’t care about the people of Gaza. But with the securing of these critical medical facilities, it is now time for both sides to agree to something that seems too obvious to need to state: that hospitals should be off limits to fighting,” Durbin continued.

Durbin then called on his colleagues to pass President Biden’s emergency supplemental request. At a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing earlier this month, Durbin [questioned](#) Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin about the supplemental request and emphasized how detrimental it would be for the

NATO alliance if the United States did not continue to financially support Ukraine. Secretary Blinken also emphasized Putin's efforts to distract the U.S. from the war in Ukraine by meeting with Hamas leadership in Moscow.

“Where did Hamas leaders turn up shortly after their despicable terrorist attack on October 7? You guessed it—sitting down with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. What nation helped supply weapons and training to Hamas? What nation is helping Russia with weapons to fight in Ukraine? Iran. Who hopes distractions and divisions over the Middle East distract the West from the war in Ukraine? Vladimir Putin. A few months ago, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy starkly told members of this body that if the U.S. stops its aid to Ukraine, Russia will win. And if Russia wins in Ukraine, it would be naïve to think they will stop there. The costs to the U.S. in repelling further Russian aggression will only continue to multiply,” Durbin said.

Durbin then reflected on his trip to Kyiv, Ukraine, in 2014 when he was walking through Maidan Square with the late Senator John McCain (R-AZ). McCain led a bipartisan delegation CODEL in Ukraine after Russia seized Crimea.

Durbin said, “John McCain and I walked somberly in Maidan Square through the makeshift shrines to those who lost their lives fighting for democracy—the freedom movement that so threatened Putin. And I cannot help but wonder what John McCain would say today—or Ronald Reagan, who rightly called the Soviet Union the evil empire—at many in Congress who hesitate to stand up to Putin and advance American security interests.”

Durbin concluded, “Let us not make a mistake that could cost the world and generations in the future by not advancing this critical supplemental funding request before the end of this calendar year. I urge my colleagues to support President Biden's national security supplemental request to aid Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific, and humanitarian crises around the globe, including Gaza.”

Video of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

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