

# **Durbin Reflects On Suffering In The Middle East And Long-Term Path To Hope And Security**

December 20 2023 9:37 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, and called for leadership to address the immediate suffering and longer term needs for a two-state solution. During his speech, Durbin also remembered the victims of the October 7<sup>th</sup> horrific Hamas terrorist attack and called for all remaining hostages to be released—including Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who has ties to Illinois.

Durbin repeated his warning that Israel not make the same mistakes in a cloud of rage that the U.S. did after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. He also called on the

Israeli government to alleviate the mounting humanitarian toll inflicted on the people of Gaza, a distressing number of them children.

“This Hamas attack was a reminder that there are still those who do not recognize Israel’s right to exist and their right to self-defense. But it also raised larger questions about how Israel should defend itself, retaliate, and address the long-term need for two neighboring people to live in peace,” Durbin said. “I fear some of the important lessons we learned the hard way have not been heeded by this Israeli government.”

Durbin continued, “Last week, the leaders of some of the world’s top relief organizations wrote in the *New York Times* that, ‘more children have been reported killed in this conflict than in all major global conflicts combined last year.’”

Durbin recently [spoke](#) with United Nations’ (UN) officials, including Secretary General António Guterres and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths, to discuss his proposal 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. Durbin also spoke this month with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry about this proposal.

Durbin continued, “Hospitals have had to try to treat civilians without the most basic of medicines, using Tylenol and vinegar for disinfectant and amputations. There are growing fears that disease outbreaks will soon replace the war as the primary source of death in Gaza. This is simply not a sustainable strategy... I’ve also raised the humanitarian toll directly with Israeli officials. Basic medical needs—beyond treating the wounded—are staggering and include curbing a potential infectious disease outbreak and caring for thousands of expecting mothers.”

Due to this humanitarian crisis, Durbin called on Hamas and Israel to stand down from all military actions around Gaza’s hospitals. He also reiterated that any U.S. military assistance to Israel must be used in accordance with the laws of war. Durbin [recently](#) joined U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen in announcing that they are working on an amendment to require that the weapons received by any country under the proposed national security supplemental are used in accordance with U.S. law and international law.

Durbin concluded his speech by calling for a two-state solution.

Durbin concluded, “This horrible conflict that has caused so much suffering is a wakeup call on the need for a two-state solution that allows for a viable Palestinian state living in peace, side-by-side, with a secure Israel. For years, I have warned that despite heroic attempts at such an agreement, spoilers on both sides have repeatedly undermined

progress. So, we have two challenges, one immediate, to end the suffering and release the remaining hostages immediately, and the second, to finally commit to finding a two-state peace agreement. This will take leadership from the Israelis and Palestinians, and let me be blunt, I do not see the current leadership of either having the vision or political will to take this desperately needed step. But it is the only way forward. It is the only way that the region and international community will fully commit to helping rebuild Gaza and support a unified Palestinian leadership. It is the only way to end the threat of violence and bring a future of hope to both the Israeli and Palestinian people.”

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

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