

Duckworth, Durbin Join Ossoff, Colleagues In Support Of Ongoing U.S. Diplomacy To Free Hostages, Restore Mutual Ceasefire Agreement in Gaza

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a member of both the U.S. Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, and U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and 24 of their Senate colleagues in expressing urgent support for the

Administration's [ongoing diplomatic efforts](#) to secure the release of Israeli hostages in tandem with the restoration of a mutual ceasefire agreement in Gaza.

“Since the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, in which Hamas abducted more than 200 civilians — including babies, young children, and the elderly — the United States has played a vital leading role in efforts to secure the release of Americans and Israelis held in Gaza,” the Senators wrote.

“On November 24th, an agreement brokered with your leadership by the United States, Qatar, and Egypt secured the release of 105 hostages — all women and children — in tandem with a seven-day ceasefire. ... Now 130 days since the October 7th massacre, two million Gazan civilians remain displaced in extreme danger and deprivation while hostages held by Hamas remain in life-threatening captivity,” the Senators continued. “We therefore write to express our urgent support for your Administration’s ongoing diplomatic efforts to secure the release of hostages in tandem with a restored mutual ceasefire in Gaza.”

“We recognize that it is in Israel’s vital national interest that Hamas — a brutal terrorist organization — be removed from power in Gaza. We continue to support Israel’s pursuit of that objective,” the Senators affirmed. “We also recognize that without a break in the fighting, humanitarian conditions for civilians in Gaza will become even more catastrophic and thousands more innocents — including many children — will die.”

Along with Duckworth, Durbin and Ossoff, the letter was co-signed by U.S. Senators Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Patty Murray (D-WA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Angus King (I-ME), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tina Smith (D-MN), Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and Peter Welch (D-VT).

Yesterday, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#), “Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns met with top officials from the Middle East in Cairo on Tuesday in an effort to push negotiations between Israel and Hamas toward a deal that would free hostages and pause fighting in the Gaza Strip. ... The talks in the Egyptian capital are part of an intensifying effort by the Biden administration to achieve a cease-fire in Gaza and bring to a halt a conflict that has reduced much of the coastal enclave to ruins and pushed the Middle East to the brink of an all-consuming regional war.”

The Senators acknowledged that “such a diplomatic achievement will require the agreement of the warring parties, and that its terms remain under negotiation.”

The Senators added, “In our judgment, it is in our urgent national interest – and the urgent humanitarian interest of millions of innocent civilians — that these negotiations succeed.”

A copy of the letter can be found [at this link](#).