

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Since Hamas terrorists attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, the United States has played an essential leadership role in supporting our ally, preventing the outbreak of a regional war, aiding in the return of hostages, and facilitating humanitarian relief for civilians in Gaza. Despite the Administration's significant efforts, including your continuing work to broker a temporary ceasefire, two million Gazans still face critical shortages in food, shelter, and medical care.

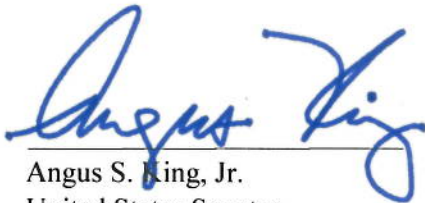
Consequently, we urge you to take additional steps to deliver humanitarian aid by deploying a U.S. Navy hospital ship and support elements to the region, and by working with the Israeli and Egyptian governments to establish maritime logistics routes and ensure civilian access to aid. In this way, we can expedite the secure delivery of humanitarian relief while reducing the risk of diversion of this aid.

Maritime support is scalable and poses less risk to U.S. personnel than relying solely on land-based operations. Opening up routes from the sea also expands the logistics network, thereby reducing reliance on constrained land-based routes. Indeed, one ship could supply a volume of aid equivalent to as many as 800 trucks.

We recognize there are risks to conducting such operations; however, the military has the expertise in managing risk. Should the risks become unacceptable to military commanders, they have the authority to change or cease operations and report concerns to civilian leadership. We point out that the military has significant experience in deploying hospital ships worldwide and providing force protection for sea-based assets. These medical ships can provide needed relief to the civilian population and reaffirm our commitment to seeking peace in the region.

Already, France has successfully docked a hospital ship in Egypt, and Indonesia's hospital ship just arrived in the region. We urge you to adopt this approach and demonstrate our country's commitment to relieving the suffering of those trapped in this conflict.

Sincerely,



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator