President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Secretary:

We are legislators for the great State of Minnesota, a state whose population is composed of people of all faiths and national origins. The people of Minnesota are globally minded citizens who believe in international human rights for all. As the elected representatives for our districts, we have a duty to speak out when we witness conduct by the United States government and our allies when we believe such conduct goes against core Minnesota values.

We are appalled by recent attacks against Palestinian civilians in East Jerusalem and Gaza beginning during the Holy Month of Ramadan, which have drawn condemnation from human rights organizations in the United States and Israel as well as the international community and the United Nations. We are calling on you to condemn the violence against Palestinians who are losing their homes as a result of the evictions, not recognized under international law, that Israel continues to carry out in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

Palestinians protesting the evictions have been met by a brutal, authoritarian crackdown. This includes multiple raids on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in which police injured hundreds of worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan by firing “less-lethal” munitions. Now, we are witnessing the escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine, threatening the safety and stability of the entire world.

Hamas responded to the forced evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and the raids of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by bombarding Israel with rocket fire and Israel has responded with airstrikes in Gaza. Both Hamas and Israel are indiscriminately killing civilians which is illegal under international law. This escalation has resulted in the deaths of at least 119 Palestinians in Gaza, including at least 31 children, 6 Palestinians in the West Bank, and 9 Israelis, with death-tolls continuing to rise. The response of the Biden administration affirming unequivocal support for Israel with no calls for the end of provocations in Sheikh Jarrah or to end the bombardment of Gaza signals to our ally that it has our permission to violate human rights and commit war crimes with the full support of the United States.

The United States does not have diplomatic relations with Hamas; Hamas is not an ally; and the United States is not funding Hamas to the tune of billions of dollars in aid and military assistance to commit its crimes against the civilian population of Israel. The United States does, however, have tremendous influence over Israel. You can demand an immediate end to evictions in East Jerusalem, and you can pressure Israel to exercise restraint. You have the power to prevent further escalation by joining our allies France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Britain in urging Israel to halt settlement-building in the occupied West Bank, and by making clear to our ally Israel that US tax dollars will no longer be used to support atrocities against the people of Palestine.

In Minnesota we are in a moment where people are advocating for the civil rights of Black, brown, and indigenous people in the wake of police violence. Minnesota protestors were also met by a state crackdown resulting in hundreds of arrests, the violation of First Amendment rights, and dozens of peaceful protestors sustaining life altering injuries by police using “less-lethal” munitions.
As citizens of the world, we implore you to use our country’s diplomatic leverage to pursue peace. As legislators for a state which has been roiled by police violence and murder and resulting unrest, we implore you to send Minnesotans the message that you will stand up for human rights at home and abroad.

Sincerely,

Sen. Omar Fateh – District 62


Sen. John Marty – District 66

Sen. Mary Kunesh – District 41

Rep. Samantha Vang – District 40B

Rep. Esther Agbaje – District 59B

Rep. Fue Lee – District 59A

Rep. Cedrick Frazier – District 45A

Rep. Tina Liebling – District 26A

Rep. Tou Xiong – District 53A


Rep. Jim Davnie – District 63A

Rep. Rena Moran – District 65A

Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn – District 42B