

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2026

H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of Israel
Prime Minister's Office
Kiryat Ben Gurion
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu,

As Congressional supporters of human rights and democracy all over the world, we write to vigorously condemn the settler violence and intimidation afflicting the West Bank village of Umm Al-Kheir. For over three months, extremists from the nearby settlement of Carmel have maintained a barbed wire fence blocking the path that the children of Umm Al-Kheir use to travel to their school. This action, which has benefited from the protection of Israeli soldiers, is a violation of the fundamental right to an education.¹ Particularly at a time when the American public is increasingly skeptical of Israel's commitment to peace, it is vital that your government take immediate steps to remove the fence and restore educational access in Umm Al-Kheir.

On April 13, 2026, students in Umm Al-Kheir found their path to school blocked by a barbed wire fence erected by settlers from the adjacent settlement of Carmel.² Adults from the village called the Israeli police for assistance, but instead, soldiers arrived and shot tear gas toward the children. One of the victims was the five-year-old son of Awdah Hathaleen, who taught at the school in Umm Al-Kheir before a settler killed him during a July 2025 attack on the village.³ The fact that Hathaleen, who was a major contributor to the internationally acclaimed film *No Other Land*, and his young son were subject to state and settler violence not a year apart from one another is a terrible stain on your government and testament to the intergenerational harm Umm Al-Kheir has endured.⁴

Israeli soldiers' actions exposed over two dozen children to tear gas, raising serious questions about how the Israeli military is abetting extremist violence against Umm Al-Kheir.⁵ Rather than intervening in defense of vulnerable students' basic right to go to school, Israeli military personnel have reportedly been standing along the fence, seemingly granting settlers permission

¹ <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-893285>; <https://wtop.com/national/2026/04/israeli-settlers-block-palestinian-kids-path-to-school-with-tear-gas-and-barbed-wire/>

² <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-893285>

³ <https://jewishcurrents.org/no-school-in-umm-al-khair>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/israel-opt-killing-of-prominent-palestinian-west-bank-activist-awda-al-hathaleen-demands-justice-and-accountability/>

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2025-07-29/awdah-hathaleen-killed-no-other-land-palestinian-activist-israeli-settler>; <https://jewishcurrents.org/no-school-in-umm-al-khair>

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/04/22/middleeast/west-bank-settler-attack-school-intl>; <https://wtop.com/national/2026/04/israeli-settlers-block-palestinian-kids-path-to-school-with-tear-gas-and-barbed-wire/>;

to continue obstructing the road to the school.⁶ In recent months, Israeli forces have faced growing criticism for enabling settlers' harassment of communities in the West Bank.⁷ We are concerned that this dynamic is affecting Umm-Al Kheir, whose residents report sustained attacks and threats by settlers.⁸ As recently as June 4, 2026, Yosef Haddad, who is a known instigator of violence whom Israeli police have previously arrested, publicly mocked and threatened villagers by the fence, warning that they "haven't seen anything yet."⁹

We understand that the Israeli military has suggested an alternative route for students to reach their school. However, this route is associated with significant security risks, and many parents have understandably decided to keep their children at home.¹⁰ The alternative route roughly doubles the distance that students need to travel and forces them to pass Carmel, creating more risks for negative and traumatizing interactions with settlers.¹¹ Its use will only escalate violence in the community.

Across the West Bank, extremist attacks have intensified as the Israeli military increasingly provides protection to the perpetrators.¹² Your government's dramatic acceleration of settlement construction—in violation of international law—has sent a similar signal of license to the settlers.¹³ Such actions imperil prospects for peace in the region, undermine Israeli security interests and place villages like Umm Al-Kheir at great risk.

At this critical juncture, continuing down the path of settler extremism will further degrade Israel's international standing and relationship with the United States. You can begin to reverse this dangerous and isolating approach by ordering your soldiers to remove the barbed wire fence in Umm Al-Kheir and to safeguard every child's right to an education.

We urge you to respect the basic premise that every child deserves to learn in peace.

Very truly yours,

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/04/22/middleeast/west-bank-settler-attack-school-intl>; <https://jewishcurrents.org/no-school-in-umm-al-khair>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c747x00m83vo>

⁸ <https://www.france24.com/en/video/20260510-west-bank-violence-no-accountability-for-settler-attacks>

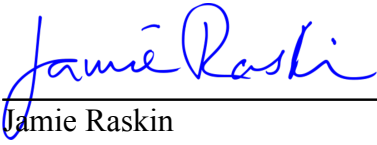
⁹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/police-confiscate-gun-from-right-wing-arab-israeli-influencer-after-road-rage-shooting/; <https://x.com/IhabHassane/status/2062602302586818941>

¹⁰ <https://wtop.com/national/2026/04/israeli-settlers-block-palestinian-kids-path-to-school-with-tear-gas-and-barbed-wire/>

¹¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2026/04/15/israel-palestinians-settlers-iran-war/8c1525fe-38e1-11f1-90c4-9772c7fab03_story.html

¹² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-inquiry-finds-israeli-forces-shield-settlers-during-attacks-palestinians-2026-06-09/>

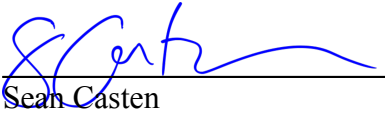
¹³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/israels-settlement-expansion-drives-mass-displacement-west-bank-un-report>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/02/1166927>



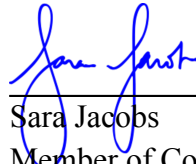
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



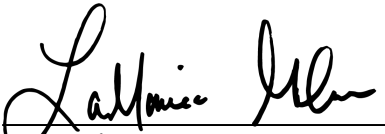
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



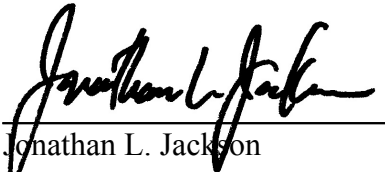
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



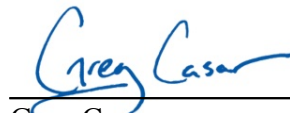
LaMonica McIver
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Maxine Waters
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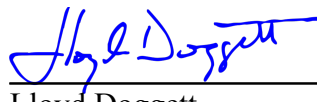
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Greg Casar
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Chris Deluzio
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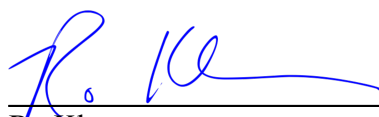
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



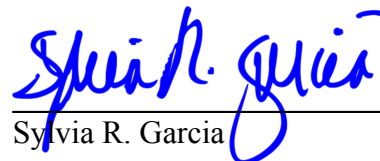
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



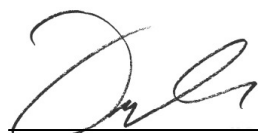
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



André Carson
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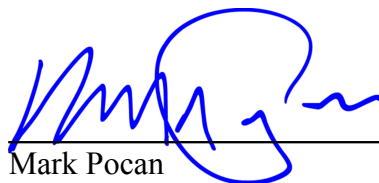
Sylvia R. Garcia
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Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



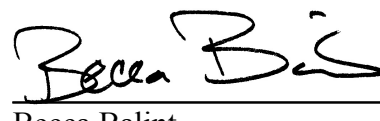
Mark Pocan
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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
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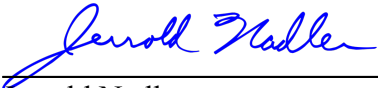
Becca Balint
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Joaquin Castro
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Val Hoyle
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Jerrold Nadler
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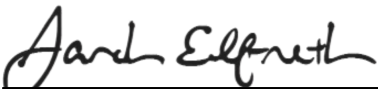
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Analilia Mejia
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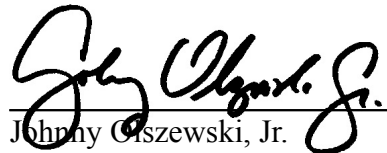
Sarah Elfreth
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Member of Congress



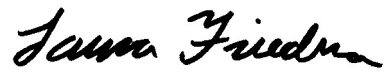
Stephen F. Lynch
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Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
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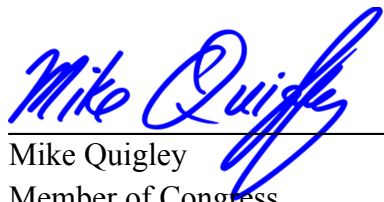
Laura Friedman
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Nancy Pelosi
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Paul D. Tonko
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Mike Quigley
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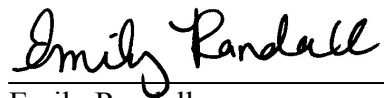
Betty McCollum
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Pramila Jayapal
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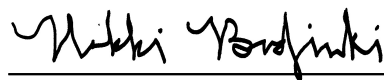
Debbie Dingell
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Emily Randall
Member of Congress



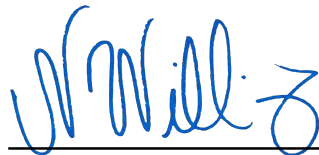
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



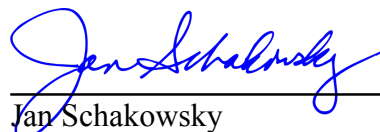
Nikki Budzinski
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



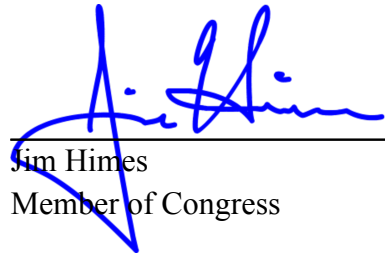
Nikema Williams
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Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



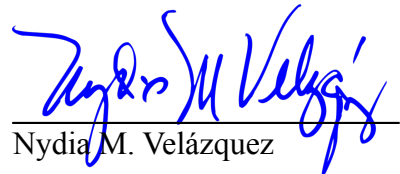
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Adelfa S. Grijalva
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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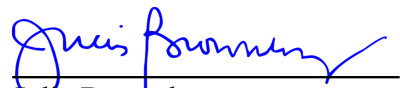
Yassamin Ansari
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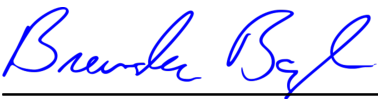
Mark DeSaulnier
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Julia Brownley
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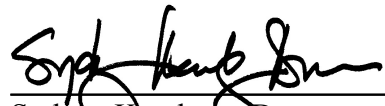
Brendan F. Boyle
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Jasmine Crockett
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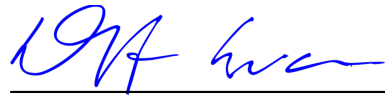
Dave Min
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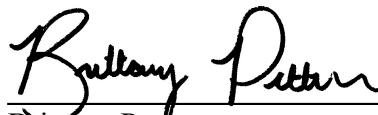
Sydney Kamlager Dove
Member of Congress



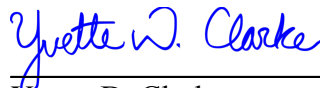
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



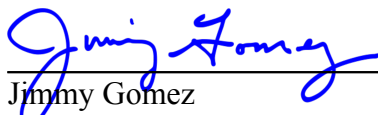
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



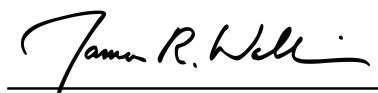
Robert J. Menendez
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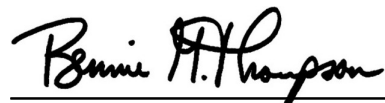
Jimmy Gomez
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Suzanne Bonamici
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James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



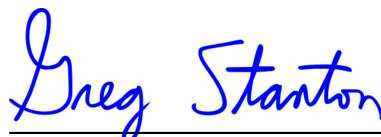
Nellie Pou
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Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



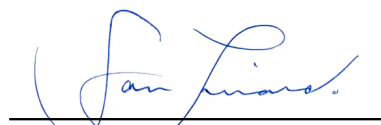
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



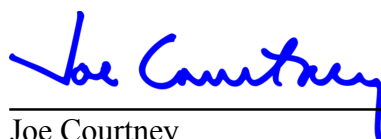
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



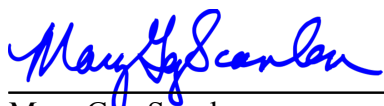
Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



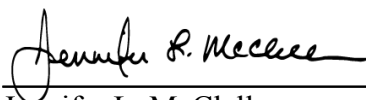
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



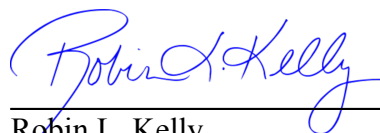
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



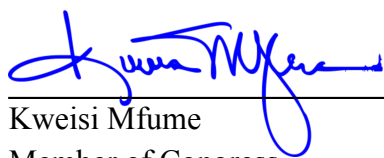
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



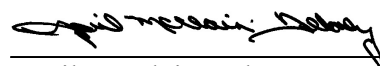
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



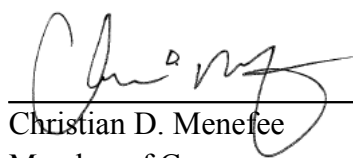
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



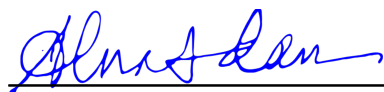
April McClain Delaney
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Christian D. Menefee
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



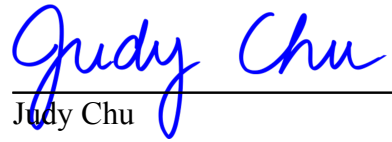
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



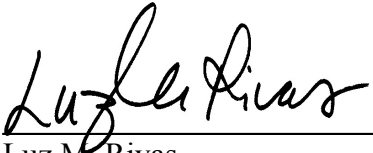
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



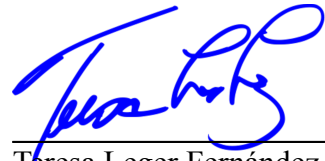
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



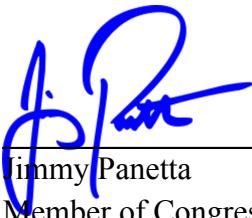
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



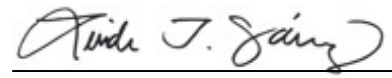
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



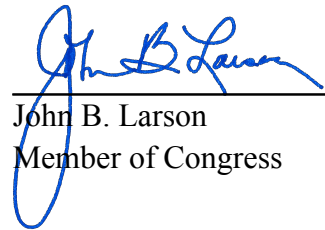
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



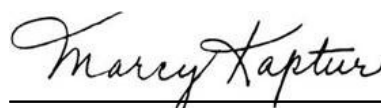
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



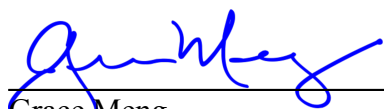
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
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Mike Thompson
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Marilyn Strickland
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