

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write with concern regarding the Israeli military's engagement in Lebanon and to express alarm that the ceasefire the Trump administration helped negotiate is deteriorating into the occupation of southern Lebanon. As you implement the new memorandum of understanding with Iran, we encourage you to engage with all legitimate actors in the region to swiftly bring the wars in Iran and Lebanon to an end, support the disarmament of Hezbollah, and work to empower the Lebanese government.

While it was welcome news to see a temporary cessation of hostilities in Lebanon announced on April 16, 2026, both Israeli forces and Hezbollah have continued military operations, in violation of the ceasefire.¹ We strongly condemn violence against civilians in all forms and support efforts by both the Israeli and Lebanese governments to ensure the safety and security of their people. Every government has a right and a responsibility to protect its citizens, and Israel has a right to defend itself. However, this does not justify unrestrained Israeli military operations, especially those that violate the current ceasefire, destroy civilian infrastructure, and lead to the death of hundreds of civilians. All sides must fully abide by the ceasefire agreement.

We are troubled by the Israeli military's practice of mass demolitions of civilian infrastructure in southern Lebanon and targeting practices that kill Lebanese civilians. After the Israeli military invaded southern Lebanon and began an occupation of the territory, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz announced plans to raze all homes in southern border villages, "following the Rafah and Beit Hanoun model in Gaza," a reference to the Israeli military's systematic destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure in Gaza.² Since then, reporting and satellite imagery have confirmed widespread demolitions of civilian homes, buildings, and religious sites in southern

¹ Granville, Samantha. "Israeli Attacks Kill Dozens within Days in Lebanon despite Ceasefire." *The BBC*, 4 May 2026, www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy523z7x0g5o.

² Lieber, Dov. "Israel to Raze All Homes in Lebanese Border Villages." *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 Apr. 2026, www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-war-news-updates/card/O8iqjACYkHd8WcTmvEHZ.

Lebanon, including the use of bulldozers and controlled demolitions.^{[3][4]} The Israeli military has also demolished bridges, roads, water pipelines, and fuel stations in southern Lebanon.⁵

More than 1 million people, 20 percent of the country's population, have been forced to flee from their homes in the south to other regions of the country.⁶ Destroying civilian homes will only lengthen and intensify the refugee crisis in Lebanon that began at the start of the Israel-Hezbollah war. This will only cause further destabilization to Lebanon and the region.

International law also protects civilian infrastructure from military attack when it is not being used for military purposes. Israel justifies its operations by saying they are dismantling homes used by Hezbollah in military operations. However, when the ceasefire was announced, Defense Minister Katz stated that the area occupied by the Israeli military had been "cleared of terrorists and weapons." Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that an occupying power is prohibited from destroying private property "except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."⁷ Considering the area is now occupied by Israel, we do not believe that civilian homes, "cleared of terrorists and weapons" pose a threat that renders their destruction "absolutely necessary."

We are particularly concerned about the use of U.S. origin weapons and equipment in these attacks. The use of U.S. origin weapons in the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure is a violation of U.S. military assistance transfer agreements with the Israeli government. Section 4 of the Arms Export Control Act states that U.S. origin arms and equipment may be sold or transferred to foreign countries only for specific purposes, which are limited to internal security, legitimate self-defense, and participation in collective measures requested by the United Nations or comparable organizations.⁸ If the President or Congress determines that a recipient country has used U.S. origin arms "for a purpose not authorized," the sale and delivery of further arms is prohibited, unless the President waives this prohibition.⁹ The targeted, mass destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure does not constitute Israeli self-defense. If U.S.-origin arms are confirmed to be used in these unauthorized activities, we ask the Trump administration to

³ Granados, Samuel, et al. "How Israel Is Using the Same Tactics in Lebanon That It Did in Gaza." *The New York Times*, 3 May 2026, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/05/03/world/middleeast/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-gaza-destruction.html.

⁴ Bassem Mroue. "Melkite Catholic Bishops Express Concern over Israeli Demolition." *AP News*, 4 May 2026, apnews.com/article/lebanon-israel-hezbollah-catholics-9dee5593f7cdda56fbefd2fde2d3397a.

⁵ "Lebanon: Flash Update #10 - Escalation of Hostilities in Lebanon." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 21 Mar. 2026.

⁶ "Lebanon: Flash Update #23 - Escalation of Hostilities in Lebanon." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 6 May 2026.

⁷ *Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*. Article 53. 12 Aug. 1949. (entered into force 21 Oct. 1950)

⁸ United States, Congress. Public Law 90-629. *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 90, 1976, pp.729.

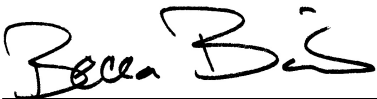
⁹ United States, Congress. Public Law 90-629. *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 90, 1976, pp.729.

enforce existing law and stop arms transfers being used in these operations until these violations cease.

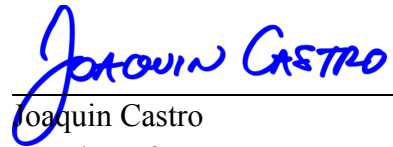
The Trump administration should take all possible steps to bring a swift end to the war and continue good-faith negotiations between the Lebanese and Israeli governments. We urge the administration to work to empower the Lebanese government and to fund the Lebanese Armed Forces to pursue Hezbollah's full demilitarization and disarmament.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



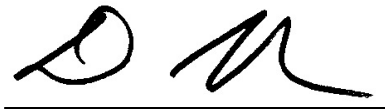
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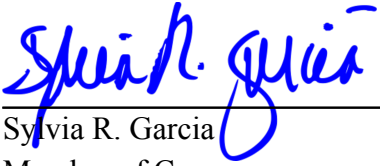
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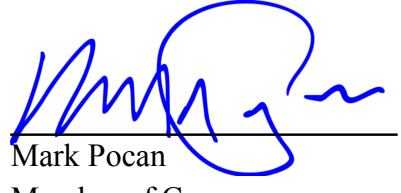
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Betty McCollum
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Robert Garcia
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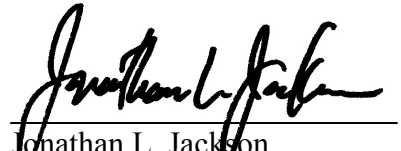
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Jonathan L. Jackson
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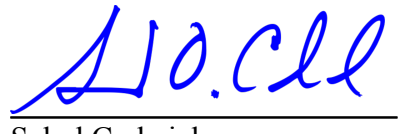
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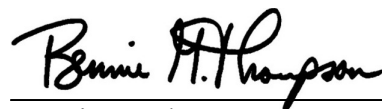
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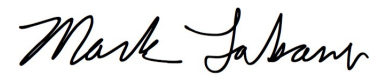
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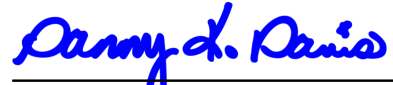
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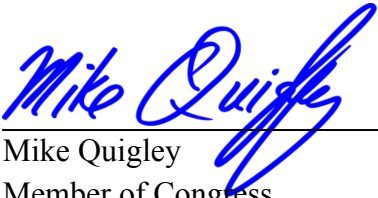
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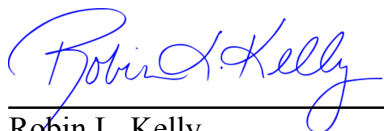
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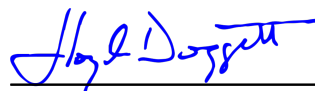
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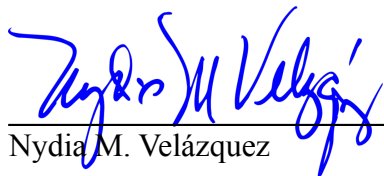
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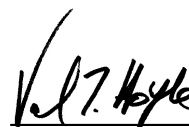
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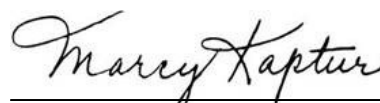
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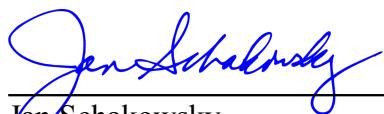
Val Hoyle
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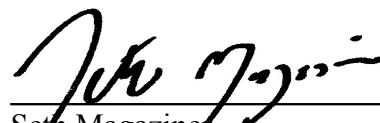
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Marcy Kaptur
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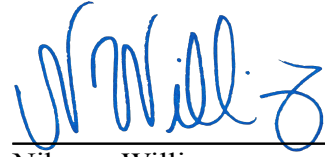
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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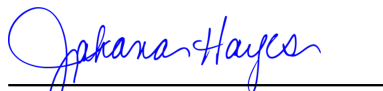
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Seth Moulton
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
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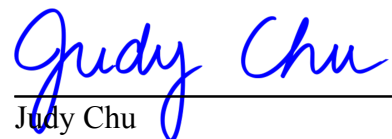
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Madeleine Dean
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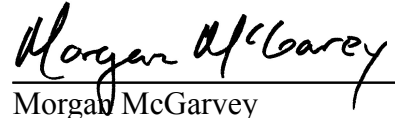
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Judy Chu
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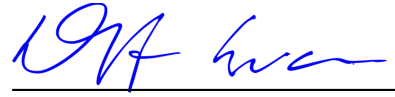
Gabe Amo
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Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



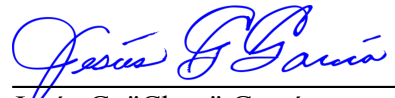
Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



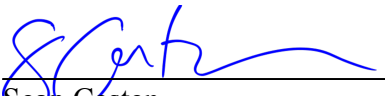
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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Patrick Ryan
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