

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

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Mr. Govoni, Mr. Reilly,

We were horrified by reporting this week on your companies' deadly security operations in Gaza. Your operations have exposed hundreds of brave American veterans to future criminal and civil liability under U.S. laws criminalizing war crimes, torture, and forced deportation.

Reports and firsthand witnesses have indicated to us that your personnel —American veterans hired as private security contractors—were brought into Israel on tourist visas inappropriate for the intended purpose of their travel, sent to Gaza armed for combat, and ordered by Israeli officials to use lethal force against unarmed and starving Palestinian civilians. We have also learned that under Israeli orders, your personnel are conducting crowd control at food distribution sites by firing live rounds over the heads of civilians and using stun grenades and pepper spray—all in an active military zone under direct supervision by Israeli military officers.

As a result, we are deeply concerned that you may have failed to alert your personnel—or investors—of the immense legal risks they face for conducting what amounts to military operations on behalf of the Israeli government on land outside of the State of Israel.

Even before the latest revelations, press had reported on Israeli military actions that include the wanton destruction of civilian homes, the use of human shields, rules of engagement resulting in disproportionate civilian casualties, and blockage of medicine and food.¹² More than 50,000 children have already been killed or injured in Gaza, and as we write, infant boys and girls are starving to death.³ Prime Minister Netanyahu, in response to a question concerning remaining legitimate targets to strike, is reported to have said “I don’t care about the targets” and ordered military officials to “destroy the homes, bomb everything in Gaza.”⁴ Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich is reported to have said, “Gaza will be totally destroyed... They will be totally despairing... and will be looking for relocation to begin a new life in other places.”⁵ As a result of these actions, U.S. allies have already cut off the supply of offensive weapons to Israel.

¹ CNN, “Israeli soldiers reveal systematic destruction of Palestinian property to create Gaza buffer zone,” 9 April, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/07/middleeast/israel-gaza-buffer-zone-troops-intl>

² AP News, “Israeli use of human shields in Gaza was systematic, soldiers and former detainees tell the AP,” May 24, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-army-human-shields-80f358dd2c87a1123f26ffada159701c>

³ UNICEF USA, May 28, 2025, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/more-50000-children-killed-or-injured-gaza>

⁴ YNET, “The Wars of Herzi Halevi,” 20 March 2025, <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra14303894>.

⁵ The Times of Israel, “Smotrich says Gaza to be ‘totally destroyed,’ population ‘concentrated’ in small area,” 6 May 2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-says-gaza-to-be-totally-destroyed-population-concentrated-in-small-area/>

We, therefore, ask that you urgently respond to the following questions:

1. What are the Rules of Engagement currently in effect for your staff in Gaza and what is the nature of their command-and-control relationship with Israeli military officers and government officials?
2. Did you inform your investors and staff prior to their departure from the United States that they are subject to U.S. criminal law prohibiting torture, war crimes, and forced deportation, including under the War Crimes Act? And further, that they could be held legally responsible for crimes by Israeli forces when those actions were enabled or facilitated by your operations?
3. Did you inform prospective staff and investors that they could face civil suits upon return to the United States under the Torture Prevention Act by Americans and the families of Americans harmed in Gaza?
4. Did you inform your staff that the International Criminal Court and third states may exercise jurisdiction over war crimes in Gaza and that they could consider your American staff as combatants for purposes of liability, potentially limiting future freedom of travel to other countries?
5. How is your organization documenting activities in Gaza and what happens to that data? We request that you preserve all documents and communications related to your contracts and work with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

We respectfully request a response withing two weeks.

Sincerely,



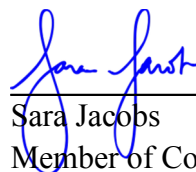
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Sara Jacobs
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CC:

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