

October 17, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, I write today to thank you for standing with Israel and urge you to encourage stability, peace, and food security for all those who are suffering in the region.

We are appalled by the assault against Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorists. We are heartsick as we pray for the safe return of hostages, and we are grief-stricken by the loss of innocent lives of both Israelis and Palestinians. We are also deeply concerned about rising levels of food insecurity in Israel and in Gaza — particularly since we know that during times of crisis and war, people already facing hunger and poverty are made even more vulnerable.

For nearly 40 years, MAZON has worked to end hunger in Israel by advancing responsive, long-term government policies. We understand the need for emergency food assistance during times of crisis and war, and we are deeply proud of our partners in Israel who are providing this life-saving support to those in need. We also know that the most meaningful, lasting solutions to food insecurity in Israel and the region will come from the Israeli government itself. It is essential that the Israeli government follow through on its responsibility to deliver equitable food assistance to those in Israel who are struggling, including particularly vulnerable, and often forgotten, populations like Bedouins and asylum seekers.

Food is essential to all people. It provides not only essential physical nourishment, but also dignity and humanity. There is a reason that food is explicitly called out in international law, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As Israel defends itself from future threats, it must follow international law, which means allowing humanitarian aid — including food and water — to reach innocent civilians in Gaza.

You clearly understand the grave importance of the United States' diplomatic efforts to prevent a regional crisis, including devastating hunger. Despite horror and hardship, we must maintain our own humanity. We must remember that all people are created *b'tselem Elohim*, in the image of God and that no one should go hungry. No one.

Last week, Jews around the world read the Torah portion *Bereishit*, recounting how words are the essence of creation. We read about how the power of

10850 Wilshire Blvd.  
Suite 400  
Los Angeles, CA 90024  
t (310) 442-0020  
f (310) 442-0030  
[mazon.org](http://mazon.org)

1101 14th Street, NW  
Suite 930  
Washington, DC 20005  
t (202) 830-0730  
f (202) 830-0649

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Abby J. Leibman

\* Titles for identification purposes only  
<sup>o</sup> Past Chair

language was employed to create the world. And now, in this heartbreaking and pivotal moment, you have a unique position of power and influence to use your words to change the world, to truly make it whole again. We are grateful for your leadership, and we stand ready to partner with you to ensure that all people — regardless of ethnicity, background, religion, or circumstance — can feed themselves and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abby J. Leibman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abby J. Leibman  
President and CEO, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger