April 11, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan:

We write to express our strong support for the Cyprus-led Amalthea humanitarian maritime corridor to increase the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the continued prioritization of an agreement reached by Israel and Hamas to release the hostages in exchange for a temporary pause in the fighting. The maritime humanitarian corridor—which allows duly-vetted aid and supplies to flow from staging areas in the Republic of Cyprus to ports in Gaza, including the pier recently announced by President Biden—presents an opportunity to provide relief from a humanitarian crisis in the short term and to ensure regional stability in the long-term.¹

The Amalthea corridor safeguards Israel’s legitimate security concerns, prevents Hamas from replenishing military capabilities or resources, and provides relief to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, all while strengthening U.S., European, and allied Arab relations in the Eastern Mediterranean. We applaud your mobilization of the U.S. military to make this humanitarian corridor a reality, and we urge the long-term application of unique American resources to maintain the route.

Because of existing partnerships between the United States, European and Arab partners, and the Republic of Cyprus—including the laudable leadership of President Nikos Christodoulides—we believe this corridor and its mission are well-supported and maintained. As a member of the European Union, a U.S. strategic partner, and a founding member of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, Cyprus has a unique ability to act as a facilitator between the parties involved. Programs like the Cyprus Center for Land Open Seas and Port Security (CYCLOPS) and the Zenon Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) have built expertise in maritime-focused missions, developed a network of skilled security practitioners, and strengthened regional ties to support the close cooperation needed to ensure success. Given the strategic locations of both CYCLOPS and JRCC—within ten miles of the Larnaca International Airport and Larnaca Port—these centers are well-positioned to provide the coordination and logistics needed to support humanitarian operations and international partners in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, including on the critical issue of the evacuation of non-combatants.

Since the start of the campaign to defeat Hamas and secure the release of the hostages, over 22,105 trucks have brought 416,460 tons of humanitarian aid into Gaza.² However, given the humanitarian crisis facing Palestinian civilians, especially in northern Gaza, the United States, Israel, and the international

community have worked together to find solutions to increase the amount of aid reaching those in greatest need. Thanks to your diplomatic efforts, Israel opened a second crossing at Kerem Shalom, and U.S. Central Command has been working in close collaboration with the Israelis to airdrop aid to Palestinian civilians. The maritime corridor represents yet another mechanism to increase the amount of humanitarian aid, including food, water, and medical supplies. It is a true humanitarian corridor that will continue to provide relief to Palestinian civilians without increasing Hamas’s military capabilities.

While the United States, Israel, and regional partners must continue to pursue all avenues to increase the amount of humanitarian aid for Palestinian civilians in Gaza, the consistent provision of aid through the maritime corridor will only be sustainable if Hamas agrees to release the hostages, which could allow for a temporary pause in the fighting as agreed to by Israel. The pressure must be maintained and increased on Hamas to release the 134 hostages who remain in captivity.

At this dangerous time when the United States and its allies find themselves confronting multiple threats, we thank you for continuing to pursue collaborative solutions with strategic partners like the Republic of Cyprus. We urge you to continue drawing on our strong international partnerships to reinforce American leadership. We believe this maritime corridor will create a more secure future for the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, the United States, and our European and Arab allies.

Sincerely,

Grace Meng
Member of Congress
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress
Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress

2 Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, “Humanitarian Efforts,”
https://govextra.gov.il/cogat/humanitarian-efforts/home/
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress