

January 11, 2022

Honorable Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We are grateful to you for your longstanding support for the State of Israel and for our country's ironclad commitment to support its security. We, the undersigned 12 (twelve) national Jewish organizations, are therefore writing to ask you to take firm action in support of Israel's security by moving the Iron Dome Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022 (H.R. 5323) forward. This legislation, which passed the House in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 420 – 9 on September 23, would provide \$1 billion in appropriations so that Israel can replenish this critical defense system to counter terrorist threats.

As American Jewish organizations dedicated to maintaining strong support for Israel's security, we implore you to not allow any more needless delays in passing this legislation. Every day that goes by without this funding is one more day of danger and insecurity for the Israeli people.

In particular, we are deeply troubled by maneuvers to delay consideration of H.R. 5323 by the full Senate. Blocking immediate consideration of the legislation weakens our entire nation's commitment to our Israeli ally's security. It is time to stop the delays, and we call on you to lead your colleagues to do so.

As you know, our country helped to create Iron Dome in 2011 in response to the unending rocket threats made against Israel by regional terrorist groups. It is estimated that more than 250,000 rockets are currently aimed at Israel from nearly all sides, a threat that keeps the Israeli people on edge.

The Iron Dome is a purely defensive system that proved its worth during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and the terrorist organizations Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). In these 11 days of hostilities, more than 4,300 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, with estimates that Iron Dome successfully intercepted roughly 90 percent of them. And while the threat from Gaza persists, so does the menacing peril from the north, where Hezbollah possesses nearly 130,000 rockets and missiles that can strike virtually every city in Israel.

It's also worth noting that the proposed supplemental funding for Iron Dome aligns squarely with the U.S. defense strategy towards Israel, codified in 2016 in the U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). That MOU commits the U.S. to provide \$38 billion

in security assistance to Israel over a 10-year period, including \$5 billion for missile defense. As part of the MOU, the U.S. is also committed to helping Israel replenish the Iron Dome when needed as a counterweight to the ceaseless and rising missile threats from the region.

The need for this appropriation is critical now because Israel's Iron Dome infrastructure has been significantly depleted. The cost of a single Iron Dome interception can be as much as \$80,000, with the cost of the batteries themselves and their operation also high. Rebuilding the supply of interceptor missiles takes time, due to the relatively slow manufacturing process, with cost being an inhibitor. On the other hand, terror groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the PIJ use less sophisticated rockets that are manufactured quickly, at a much lower cost, but that are no less deadly.

We as American Jews believe that Israel has no better friend or partner than the United States and we are proud to be supporting a defense system that protects all of Israel's citizens, regardless of their religious background or ethnicity. Unfortunately, Israel's enemies do not distinguish amongst its diverse population, with rockets directed at all members of Israeli society. To put it simply: the Iron Dome saves all Israeli lives - Jewish, Muslim, and Christian alike - targeted by Hamas, Hezbollah and the PIJ.

We therefore urge you to ignore the unfortunate gamesmanship that is taking place right now in the Senate and to press forward in bringing the House-passed legislation to the floor for a vote. President Biden has made it clear that he will immediately sign such legislation, and with the House having done its work, it is time for the Senate to act. The result will no doubt be another overwhelmingly bipartisan vote in favor of this aid, honoring the longstanding U.S. commitment to provide for Israel's security.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Congress
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Agudath Israel of America
Ameinu
B'nai B'rith International
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
Israel Policy Forum
Jewish Women International
Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative Movement)
Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Union for Reform Judaism
Zionist Organization of America