

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20510

August 5, 2024

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20220

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

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General of the United States  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Secretary Yellen, Secretary Blinken, and Attorney General Garland:

We are writing to request that the Administration fully utilize all tools at its disposal to crack down on Hezbollah's international financing network, including the imposition of sanctions. In the wake of Hezbollah's deadly attack in Israel this past weekend, we should be reminded of Hezbollah's stated goals. Senior officials within Hezbollah have said, "Israel is merely a tool. The main war, the real war, is with America."<sup>1</sup> We urge you to take further action to weaken Hezbollah's access to financial resources used to carry out terrorism that threatens Americans, Israelis, and other allies around the world.

Hezbollah poses a grave threat to the security of the United States and the civilian population of Israel, maintaining a substantial arsenal of weapons, provided by Iran, that have been continually deployed against Israel's population. On July 27, Hezbollah launched an attack on a soccer field that killed twelve children and teenagers, and injured dozens more, in what was the deadliest event in Israel since Hamas's October 7 attack.<sup>2</sup> The United States has formally recognized Hezbollah's responsibility for these attacks. In addition, over the past ten months, northern Israel has come under fire from thousands of Hezbollah's rockets, missiles, drones and mortars. More than 60,000 Israelis have had to evacuate their homes in northern Israel and it remains unsafe for

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<sup>1</sup> Twitter, MEMRI "#Hezbollah Foreign Relations Chief Khalil Rizk: Our Real War Is With #America, Not #Israel; Israel Is Just A Tool – Audio of report here," #MEMRI <https://x.com/MEMRIReports/status/1805323784762634681>

<sup>2</sup> Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, "Funerals Held for the Victims of Hezbollah Attack on Mejdal Shams," July 28, 2024 <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/07/28/funerals-held-for-victims-of-hezbollah-attack-on-majdal-shams/>

them to return.<sup>3</sup> It is imperative that the United States leads in this critical moment and protects its greatest ally in the Middle East, Israel.

Hezbollah remains one of the most well-equipped, well-armed terrorist organizations, most notably from the substantial support it receives from Iran. Recognizing the threat posed by Hezbollah, Congress authorized the United States government's diplomatic and law enforcement agencies to target the vast network of criminal revenues that Hezbollah uses to support its activities. We must do more to block the financial assets of Hezbollah and the global network of criminal activity that supports its military operations. With these concerns in mind, we urge the Administration to fully implement the following sanctions regimes authorized by Congress:

- Section 102 of P.L. 114-102 (Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act), targeting financial institutions processing transactions on behalf of Hezbollah laundering its money;
- Section 103 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2018 authorizing sanctions on “an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state” that provides financial backing to Hezbollah.<sup>4</sup> This provision allows for sanctions against foreign governments, government officials, and state-run agencies, including the Central Bank of Iran, that financially support its terrorist activities, and their efforts to recruit, train, and expand its network of operatives; and,
- Executive Order 13224, targeting Hezbollah members and those that provide them with material support. Hezbollah has thrived financially by maintaining its close relationship with Iran and by claiming to be a provider of essential services to communities in Lebanon. The U.S. should continue to name and sanction members of the organization so that financial institutions and service providers understand the risks of doing business with these entities and individuals.

In addition, we ask that you leverage law enforcement and diplomatic processes to put pressure on Hezbollah, including:

- Encouraging the use of the State Department's “Rewards for Justice” program to target and collect information on potential Hezbollah terrorists.<sup>5</sup> This program also encourages U.S. and international law enforcement entities to consider Hezbollah a major narcotics trafficker which remains a large revenue stream for the organization;
- Taking additional steps to prosecute Hezbollah financiers as part of a Transnational Criminal Organization.<sup>6</sup> Hezbollah Western Hemisphere, is known to traffic illegal drugs, weapons, counterfeit goods, and human beings as sources of revenue, including in the

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<sup>3</sup> The Wall Street Journal, “In Israel’s North, Some Displaced Residents Call for Step Up in Fight Against Hezbollah, May 27, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-israels-north-some-displaced-residents-call-for-step-up-in-fight-against-hezbollah-41284bdb>

<sup>4</sup> Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act, Section 102 of P.L. 114-102, (2015)

<sup>5</sup> Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act, Section 103 of P.L. 115-272, (2018)

<sup>6</sup> Washington Institute for Near East Policy, “Hezbollah’s Transnational Organized Crime,” April 21, 2016, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollahs-transnational-organized-crime>

Western Hemisphere. The Department of Justice should reinvigorate initiatives such as Project Cassandra which targeted Hezbollah's global criminal revenue streams<sup>7</sup>; and,

- Pressuring the European Union to fully designate Hezbollah as a terror group for the terrorism it directs and finances around the globe, including on European soil. In 2013, the European Union sanctioned what it refers to as Hezbollah's military wing, but it has yet to formally designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization. More international pressure on Hezbollah must be placed to discourage and disincentivize countries, especially in Europe, from continuing relations with Hezbollah's members and agencies in the Lebanese government.

Once again, we urge you to please use all tools at your disposal to crack down on Hezbollah's international financing network, in order to protect American interests around the world. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress



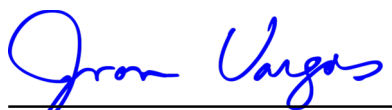
Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

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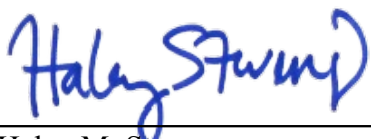
<sup>7</sup> United States Drug Enforcement Administration, "DEA And European Authorities Uncover Massive Hizballah Drug And Money Laundering Scheme," February 1, 2016  
<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2016/02/01/dea-and-european-authorities-uncover-massive-hizballah-drug-and-money>



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress



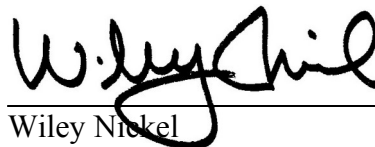
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David Scott  
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Wiley Nickel  
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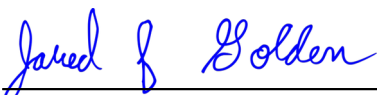
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Member of Congress



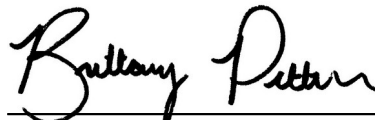
Dean Phillips  
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Don Bacon  
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Jared Golden  
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Brittany Pettersen  
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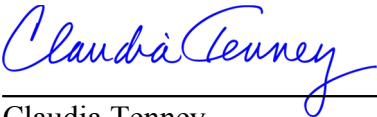
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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



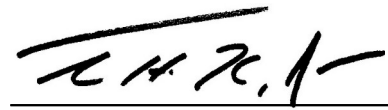
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Jim Costa  
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Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



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Thomas H. Kean, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Marcus J. Molinaro  
Member of Congress



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Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



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Lance Gooden  
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Norma J. Torres  
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Steve Cohen  
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Ritchie Torres  
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Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress

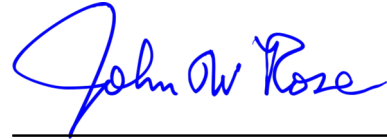


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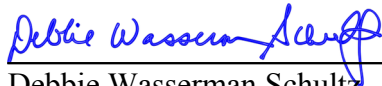
Brandon Williams  
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Yadira Caraveo M.D.  
Member of Congress



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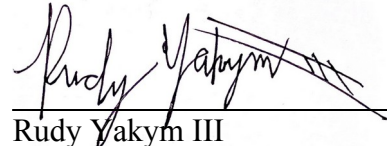
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
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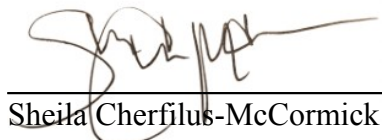
Jimmy Panetta  
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Susie Lee  
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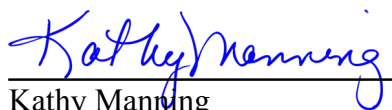
Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress

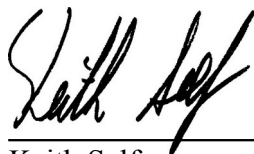


Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



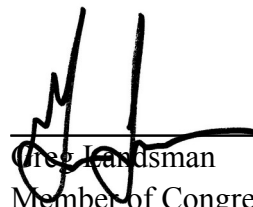
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Kathy Manning  
Member of Congress



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Keith Self  
Member of Congress



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Greg Handsman  
Member of Congress



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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress