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September 29, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

I write to you today in regard to the \$1 billion in supplemental funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. It is important to acknowledge that the Iron Dome system saves civilian lives from missile attacks. That is unquestionably a good thing, and something I support.

Let's be clear, however: According to the terms of the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel, the Iron Dome system was already fully funded. The \$1 billion being offered now is in addition to that, on top of the \$3.8 billion in military aid that the United States provides to Israel, more than any other country in the world. Contrary to what some have claimed, Iron Dome has never at been at risk of being defunded or decommissioned.

If the goal of this supplemental funding is to help Israel replenish Iron Dome after the war that took place in May, it would be irresponsible if we do not at the same time address the enormous destruction and suffering that that war caused the Palestinians in Gaza.

Round after round of Israeli bombardment left huge portions of Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas of the world, completely demolished. Over 1,000 homes were destroyed. Seventeen hospitals and clinics and dozens of schools were severely damaged, as was Gaza's only Covid-19 testing laboratory. Sewage systems and water pipes were destroyed, sending wastewater into Gaza's street and cutting off fresh water and sewer service to many of its people. 72,000 people were displaced. All of this destruction comes on top of the longstanding economic and humanitarian crises facing Gaza, where 70 percent of young people are unemployed and have little hope for the future.

President Biden is attempting to restore Americans' position in the world as a supporter of human rights and dignity for all people. For us to provide an additional billion dollars in aid to Israel while ignoring the suffering of people in Gaza would be unconscionable and irresponsible. Just as we stand with the Israeli people's right to live in peace and security, we must do so for the Palestinian people as well. I ask, as Senate Majority Leader, that you work with the

Appropriations Committee to ensure that the same amount, \$1 billion, in assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza be provided in FY2022 appropriations through an increased overall 302(b) allocation for the State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bernard Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR