

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 27, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write with grave concerns regarding the U.S. role in and financial support for the troubled Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), a private group supported by U.S. security contractors and connected to deadly violence against starving people seeking food in Gaza. Blurring the lines between delivery of aid and security operations shatters well-established norms that have governed distribution of humanitarian aid since the ratification of the Geneva Conventions in 1949. We urge you to immediately cease all U.S. funding for GHF and resume support for the existing UN-led aid coordination mechanisms with enhanced oversight to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches civilians in need.

Since March 2, the Netanyahu government has imposed a near-total blockade of food, fuel, medicine and other humanitarian supplies into Gaza. Amidst a backdrop of increasing malnutrition in Gaza, in late May the Netanyahu government allowed GHF to deliver limited amounts of aid at just four locations primarily in the south of Gaza, while continuing to prohibit the majority of aid through UN-led mechanisms. GHF is an Israeli- and U.S.-backed private mechanism created to deliver food aid at purportedly secure distribution sites in Gaza through coordination with the Israeli military and with support from private U.S. security and logistics companies.

GHF has been embroiled in controversy since its founding. The organization's initial executive director, Jake Wood, resigned just before GHF began distributing aid on May 26, stating "it is clear that it is not possible to implement this plan while also strictly adhering to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, which I will not abandon."¹ It is not possible that this GHF system with only four militarized distribution sites could replace the UN-led aid network that had more than 400 aid distribution points during the temporary ceasefire. Moreover, by requiring Palestinians to travel long distances to access food, GHF's model risks contributing to the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, raising serious concerns about its role in a broader effort to depopulate parts of Gaza. On July 7, Reuters reported on a troubling proposal bearing GHF's name to build large-scale camps called "Humanitarian Transit Areas" to house Palestinians inside and possibly outside Gaza.²

¹ Kingsley, Patrick, and Jin Yu Young. "Gaza Humanitarian Foundation Head, Jake Wood, Resigns." *The New York Times*, 26 May 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/05/26/world/asia/gaza-aid-wood-independence-resigns.html.

² Landay, Jonathan, and Aram Roston. "Exclusive: Proposal Outlines Large-Scale 'Humanitarian Transit Areas' for Palestinians in Gaza." *Reuters*, 7 July 2025, www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-backed-aid-group-proposed-human-transit-areas-palestinians-gaza-2025-07-07/.

Since this GHF scheme began, public reports have found that more than 700 starving people have been killed and nearly 5,000 injured while desperately seeking food at or near often chaotic GHF distribution sites.³ According to reports and eyewitness accounts, civilians have been fired at by tanks, drones, and helicopters, as well as soldiers on the ground, as they attempt to get food and humanitarian supplies.⁴ On June 27, the UN Secretary General said “any operation that channels desperate civilians into militarized zones is inherently unsafe. It is killing people.”⁵ More than 240 reputable NGOs have signed a June 30 joint statement calling for “immediate action to end the deadly Israeli distribution scheme (including the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation) in Gaza, revert to the existing UN-led coordination mechanisms, and lift the Israeli government’s blockade on aid and commercial supplies.”⁶

Despite these concerns, the State Department approved \$30 million for GHF in late June. Authorized under a “priority directive” from the White House and State Department, the Trump Administration exempted GHF from a comprehensive audit that is usually required for groups receiving USAID grants for the first time.⁷ In proceeding with this funding, the administration also ignored its own requirements for vetting implementers of U.S. assistance, and an internal government assessment where USAID officials raised “critical concerns” about the GHF proposal, citing “operational and reputational risks and lack of oversight,” and noting that the risk management plan “does not provide sufficient information to ensure that aid will reach intended recipients.”⁸ The Trump Administration also waived legal requirements to consult with Congress on the use of funds, certify that “oversight policies, processes, and procedures have been established...and are in use to prevent the diversion to Hamas and other terrorist and extremist entities in Gaza,” and establish third-party monitoring of assistance. There should be no American taxpayer dollars contributing to this scheme.

Beyond the direct funding for and operations of GHF, the U.S. security contractors tied to GHF’s aid distribution scheme raise further concerns. Safe Reach Solutions, LLC (SRS) and UG Solutions, LLC (UG) have both reportedly been contracted to provide security and personnel in support of GHF operations in Gaza. In fact, GHF and SRS share services and staff to manage

³ Staff, Al Jazeera. “‘Going Hungry’: More than 700 Palestinians Killed Seeking Aid in Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 5 July 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/5/going-hungry-more-than-700-palestinians-killed-seeking-aid-in-gaza.

⁴ Saab, Sheren Falah, et al. “Testimonies: IDF Responsible for Lethal Shootings near U.S.-Led Aid Site in Gaza.” *Haaretz.com*, Haaretz, 5 June 2025, www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/2025-06-05/ty-article-magazine/premium/testimonies-idf-responsible-for-lethal-shootings-near-rafah-u-s-led-aid-site/00000197-3ff2-da41-a9f7-3ff623280000. ; Williamson, Lucy. *Gaza Aid Contractor Tells BBC He Saw Colleagues Fire on Hungry Palestinians*. 3 July 2025, www.bbc.com/news/articles/cnvmry71q5yo.

⁵ Nichols, Michelle. “UN Chief Slams US-Backed Gaza Aid Operation: ‘It Is Killing People.’” *Reuters*, 27 June 2025, www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-chief-says-us-backed-gaza-aid-operation-is-unsafe-killing-people-2025-06-27/.

⁶ “GAZA: Starvation or Gunfire — Not a Humanitarian Response | Oxfam International.” *Oxfam International*, 7 July 2025, www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/gaza-starvation-or-gunfire-not-humanitarian-response.

⁷ Landay, Jonathan. “Exclusive: US to Give \$30 Million to Gaza Aid Operation despite Violence Concerns.” *Reuters*, 24 June 2025, www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-give-30-million-gaza-aid-operation-despite-violence-concerns-2025-06-24/.

⁸ Yahya Abou-Ghazala, and Jennifer Hansler. “USAID Review Raised ‘Critical Concerns’ over Gaza Aid Group Days before \$30 Million US Grant.” *CNN*, 9 July 2025, www.cnn.com/2025/07/08/us/usaids-gaza-humanitarian-foundation-israel-grant.

core aspects of the operation, while financing for the SRS is even more opaque than that of GHF. On July 3, the AP reported that these “American contractors guarding aid distribution sites in Gaza are using live ammunition and stun grenades as hungry Palestinians scramble for food” and that “bullets, stun grenades and pepper spray were used at nearly every distribution, even if there was no threat.” Despite many of the contractors having no combat experience or proper training on offensive weapons, “each contractor was equipped with a pistol, stun grenades, tear gas and an Israeli-made automatic rifle capable of firing dozens of rounds within seconds.”⁹ The introduction of U.S. security contractors into Gaza places them in a volatile environment where new militia groups are reportedly forming with Israel’s help, increasing the risks for both Palestinians and the Americans now on the ground.¹⁰ Those contractors have already been attacked and injured in Gaza, and the longer they are there, the longer they are a target for Hamas and other groups in Gaza.¹¹

The U.S. government must stop facilitating the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation operations and use U.S. leverage to urge the Netanyahu government to revert to the UN-led mechanism, both for the safety and well-being of Palestinians in Gaza and to preserve humanitarian principles that have existed for decades.

Given the concerns outlined in this letter, we ask that you respond to the below questions within two weeks:

1. Does the State Department assess that civilians have been killed in or around the GHF distribution sites? If so, how many have been killed and who was responsible for their deaths? Has the State Department requested information from the Israeli government or from GHF and contractors on the ground concerning any incidents of civilian harm?
2. Please provide GHF’s complete funding application and all supporting documentation, including documentation requested from and submitted by GHF related to funding, budget, risk management, expansion plans et al., and any internal assessments.
3. What procurement mechanism was used to execute the \$30 million award announced on June 26 and who signed the agreement? Who is liable for any compliance violations? Were you aware of concerns raised by USAID personnel about GHF’s ability to protect Palestinians while delivering food aid?
4. Please list all statutory and regulatory requirements that were waived in order to proceed with the \$30 million award, the waiver authority exercised, and the justification for each such waiver. Has the State Department relayed to GHF any requirements that it must meet before additional funding would be disbursed?
5. The UN-led aid mechanism involved delivering aid directly to registered beneficiaries, checking against a pre-established list, and according to needs. What mechanisms does GHF have in place to identify aid recipients? Has the State Department conducted any

⁹ Frankel, Julia, and Mednick, Sam. “Two US Contractors Describe Chaos and Gunfire as Palestinians Seek Food in Gaza.” *AP News*, 2 July 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/palestinians-israel-gaza-contractors-aid-distribution-fe27f3ea83e06a09d66424eed7a5d56f>

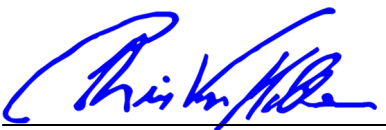
¹⁰ Boxerman, Aaron, and Patrick Kingsley. “Israel Armed Palestinian Militia to Fight Hamas, Officials Say.” *The New York Times*, 5 June 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/06/05/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-militia-netanyahu.html.

¹¹ “2 American Workers Injured at Gaza Aid Distribution Site; Palestinians Killed by Airstrikes amid Attempts to Find Food.” *Cbsnews.com*, 5 July 2025, www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-gaza-hamas-food-distribution-missile-strikes-deaths/.

assessments of GHF's compliance with international humanitarian law, including obligations related to neutrality, impartiality, and non-discrimination?

6. Which other government and non-government entities have contributed to GHF thus far? List all known previous, current, and anticipated future sources of funding.
7. Has the State Department provided any direct or indirect funding for Safe Reach Solutions, LLC (SRS) or UG Solutions, LLC (UG)? Will any of the \$30 million announced for GHF be provided to SRS or UG?
8. Does the Administration currently plan to provide any additional U.S. government funding to GHF, SRS or UG and, if so, when and in what amounts?
9. Have any U.S. nationals employed by either Safe Reach Solutions, LLC (SRS) or UG Solutions, LLC (UG) engaged in hostilities in Gaza? If so, has that resulted in any casualties and if so, how many?
10. Has the U.S. government provided any licenses to either Safe Reach Solutions, LLC (SRS) or UG Solutions, LLC (UG) for operations in Gaza, including any licenses for the export of any defense articles, defense services, or firearms? If so, please provide such licenses. If not, on what basis are they operating?
11. Multiple aid organizations and rights groups have warned GHF's model violates core humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, independence, impartiality). On what basis does the State Department assess that GHF aligns with these principles?

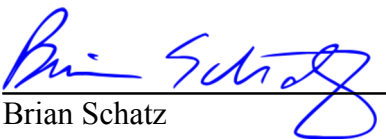
Sincerely,



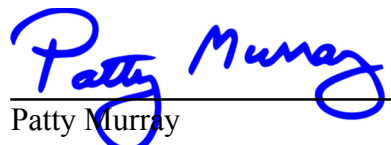
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



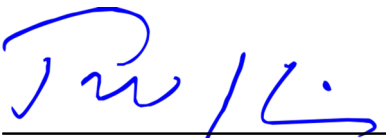
Peter Welch
United States Senator



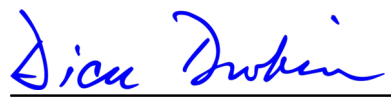
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

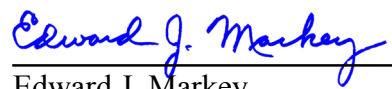

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Bernard Sanders
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

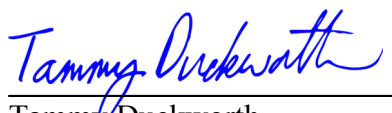

Tina Smith
United States Senator

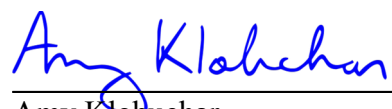

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

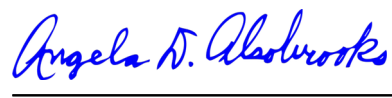

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

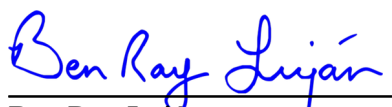

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

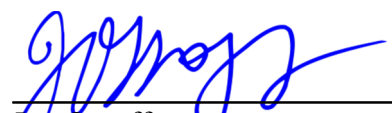

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

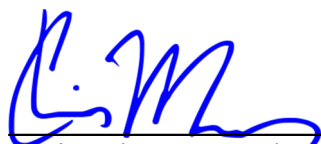

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator


Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senator


Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator


Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator