

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 8, 2023

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express concern about threats to West Bank stability and the risks these threats pose to U.S. national security interests and to civilians. As Israel confronts the atrocities of the October 7th Hamas attacks, and threats in Gaza and southern Lebanon, it is crucial that U.S. and Israeli policy reinforce the stability and security of the West Bank.

Alarming incidents of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians represent an acute destabilizing risk that must be mitigated to prevent wider conflict in the region. Israeli media has reported that Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security service, is itself concerned that settler violence could inflame the West Bank.¹ Moreover, reports from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that Israeli forces at times accompany extremist settlers as they attack Palestinian people, evict them from their homes, and destroy property, are cause for serious concern and must be addressed.²

If additional action to prevent these violent attacks is not taken, we worry that civilians and U.S. national security interests will suffer grave harm. The situation is likely to exacerbate anger and grievance among the people of the West Bank and across the Arab world, inhibit efforts to cooperate with Arab states against shared threats, and undermine moderate Palestinian leaders who can offer an alternative to Hamas and make peace with Israel. Ultimately, these conditions could provoke widespread violence and a broader conflict.

We are encouraged by recent statements from the White House emphasizing the need to mitigate settler violence. We also note the vital role that the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (USSC) is playing to manage risk in the area.

However, more must be done. We urge your administration to enhance its diplomatic efforts to prevent further violence and respectfully request a briefing from your administration on current policy to address incidents of extremist settler violence and the forcible displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank.

¹ “Shin Bet said to warn settler violence could cause West Bank eruption.” *The Times of Israel*. October 30, 2023.

² “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #23.” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). October 29, 2023.

Thank you for your timely response to this request.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator