

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4313

May 17, 2021

The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Ted Deutch
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Middle
East, North Africa, and Global
Counterterrorism
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Meeks and Chair Deutch,

We write today to express concern with the priorities of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and especially with those of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism (MENAGC).

Since Monday, May 10, Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, has fired over 3,150 rockets into Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and other Israeli cities, resulting in 10 confirmed fatalities so far.¹ They are strategically targeting Israeli civilians, including women and children, and non-military targets.

Thanks primarily to aid and weapons from Iran, Hamas has stockpiled 7,000 rockets, 300 anti-tank missiles, 100 anti-aircraft missiles, and dozens of unmanned aerial vehicles, and has amassed an army of 30,000 soldiers, while the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has 6,000 rockets on hand.² It is not hard to imagine this crisis escalating even further in the coming days and weeks, putting even more Israeli lives in danger.

In the initial May schedule released on April 30, there were no MENAGC subcommittee hearings or briefings confirmed. In the second iteration released on May 12, in the midst of the attacks by Hamas and PIJ, there was one MENAGC event added. It is a closed door, off the record briefing for Subcommittee Members to discuss "the State Department's Efforts to Combat Transnational White Identity Terrorism," set to occur on May 27.

It is inconceivable and unacceptable that MENAGC would not host a briefing or hearing on the current situation in Israel. Israel is the United States' strongest ally and a lynchpin of regional security in the Middle East. This is an urgent, dire, and existential threat. We should focus on supporting Israel rather than hearing about "transnational white identity terrorism," a non-urgent topic developed by the woke, socialist agenda of your party. We should not waste our time playing political games fueled by identity politics. We urge you to instead provide Subcommittee Members access to experts from the State Department, Department of Defense, and intelligence community to hear an update and allow us to contribute to strategic next steps.

¹ <https://twitter.com/IsraelMFA/status/1394222496572968961?s=20>

² <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2021/05/13/hamas-escalates-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>

Chairman Meeks, last week, you stated, "What Hamas is doing is clear. It's a terrorist attack... So we've got to speak out in that regard and let the people of Israel know that we stand with them."³ Now, we are asking you to do just that: speak out, and empower this Committee to do so as well. We would also encourage you to include the consideration of bills on this matter to the full committee markup scheduled for May 19. Such legislation could increase sanctions on Hamas and PIJ and reaffirm Congress' support for the state of Israel.

I look forward to immediate action, both at the subcommittee and full committee levels. We appreciate a timely response to this urgent problem.

Sincerely,



Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



María Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Scott Perry
Member of Congress

³ <https://jewishinsider.com/2021/05/democrats-pocan-luria-israel-speeches-house-of-representatives/>