



Senator Peter Welch
Remarks as Delivered
On Demanding Action and Accountability for the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza
July 29, 2025

Mr. President, the Israeli-inflicted starvation of Palestinians in Gaza must end. It must end. I have come to the floor time and again to urge the Senate to take action—to demand a ceasefire; to stop the bombing; to demand a surge of humanitarian aid in Gaza; and to bring home the hostages.

Two months ago, I spoke about a young girl who starved to death in Gaza, Jinan Iskafi. Seen here, who died in the arms of her father. All those speeches have been to no avail. Tragically, Jinan—and by the way, that name means ‘paradise.’ The hope of that family for what they hoped would be a future for this beautiful young girl, died of starvation. Government-inflicted starvation in Gaza.

And tragically, many more young children have followed. Jinan’s death, and the deaths of so many tens of thousands of innocent people in Gaza, will become part of our history. Because the U.S.A. shares responsibility for this catastrophe, and we and future generations of Americans will have to live with that forever.

The children who survive this war will be remembered as victims of a unique class of warfare. This is a man-made famine, caused by weapons provided by the United States, and paid for—by the way—by U.S. taxpayers.

Mr. President, the starvation we’re seeing today is not the unforeseen or unintended consequence of war. Let me be direct: the starvation we are witnessing today is the result of a military policy to concentrate the Palestinian population into an ever-smaller slice of land.

The starvation we are witnessing today is an advanced and accelerating stage of the Netanyahu government’s military strategy devised and executed immediately following the terrible attacks by Hamas on October 7. And that was to force the Palestinians out of northern Gaza and to induce them to leave the territory forever.

And compelled by hunger and thirst, the people, the Palestinians in Gaza are being forced to make their way to a handful of sites—what our closest allies uniformly condemned as the ‘drip feeding of aid.’

This so-called humanitarian ‘pause’ is a mirage. It’s false. It’s a trickle of aid to the mere 12% of Gaza that is not a military zone, that is being razed and flattened as we speak—*razed and flattened as we speak*—razed to ensure that it cannot be returned to.

From the earliest days after October 7, we witnessed this plan that can only be seen for what it is: a systematic and wanton destruction of homes, of mosques, of hospitals, and of schools. That is what is happening.

With bombs provided by American taxpayers, the Netanyahu government has unleashed the most deadly and destructive aerial bombardment campaign since Vietnam. More than 200,000 buildings were destroyed. Thousands of children killed and injured; thousands of amputees. And it goes on and on.

In the last three months, that campaign has continued: thousands more homes have been flattened by controlled demolitions—self conscious application of military explosives to destroy a home or a school. Thousands more have been demolished by bulldozers before the very eyes of people whose homes they are seeing totally flattened.

It’s too late for the 60,000 people that have been killed in Gaza. But Mr. President, it is not too late for the Senate to act. We are at an absolutely catastrophic inflection point. And I believe that the United States Senate has an obligation—as our country does—under international humanitarian law to act. And we can act and help to save thousands of Palestinians who, as I speak, are starving to death—*as I speak, are starving to death*.

Two months ago, I led a resolution—it was sponsored by 46 Democrats—that had a simple demand: our country must work to end the siege on food aid. It was blocked.

You know, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I’m sure every bit as much as me are horrified at the suffering in Gaza. But it’s not enough for us to be horrified. We have to act. We all condemn Hamas. We all want the release of the remaining hostages. But we have to ask ourself the question: ‘is it at all justifiable that there is a policy—that has to be recognized—that starvation is being used as a tool of warfare?’

I reject the legitimacy of that act. It’s a war crime, Mr. President. It’s a war crime to starve a population to get what you want from your enemy, as righteous as your

defense against an enemy may be. It's illegal to starve children to obtain a battlefield advantage.

Yet, the Netanyahu government has actually said it's doing that. My view, Mr. President: it's long, *long*-past the time to say *enough*. *Enough*: “No. *The United States will not stand by while hunger is used as a weapon. We don't do that.*”

We cannot separate the current starvation in Gaza from the Netanyahu government's strategy of forcibly displacing Palestinians from their land. A short-term surge of aid to keep Palestinians alive is not what we need. We need full, uninhibited, generous, accessible aid—medical and food.

But that's not the Netanyahu government policy. And we can sometimes act as though we're not an agent here, or we don't quite see, or we want to give them the benefit of the doubt because Israel has been our ally. But take the words—can we be numb to the words of the Netanyahu government officials?

The Prime Minister himself said, ‘I don't care about the targets,’ and ordered military officials to ‘destroy the homes, bomb everything in Gaza.’ *He said that!*

Finance Minister Smotrich said, ‘Gaza will be totally destroyed...civilians will be sent to ...the south,’ to a so-called, ‘humanitarian zone... and from there they will start to leave in great numbers to third countries.” *He said that.* A high official in the Israeli government.

Heritage Minister Eliyahu last week—*last week*—said that Israeli government was ‘rushing toward Gaza being wiped out.’ There's no mystery here. These are the statements of high government officials.

Defense Minister Katz said that ‘Gaza residents, this is a final warning...you will pay the full price. Return the hostages and remove Hamas, and other options will open for you, including leaving for other places in the world for those who want to.’ The Palestinians who live in Gaza, hard as it may be for us to appreciate, that's what they call home. And they want to stay there.

Mr. President, the tragedy and suffering in Gaza today demands our full attention and our full engagement because this a war we're contributing to sustaining. And I am here today to debate Gaza's famine conditions because the United States has been paying for weapons Israel is using to flatten Gaza—but not to feed Palestinians in Gaza.

It was American taxpayers that paid for the bombs and bulldozers that are continuing to flatten homes to ensure they are never returned to and that are creating the misery that all of us are shocked to see today. And it is America—first under President Biden and now under President Trump—that provides cover for extremists in the Netanyahu government to continue these actions.

Mr. President, America's closest allies—they have called for an end to the war and cut off the shipment of weapons that send a green light to the extremist government of Benjamin Netanyahu. And yet just two weeks ago, President Trump notified this Senate that he intends to ship another half billion dollars' worth of 2000-pound bombs, and 1000-pound bombs to Israel—bombs paid for by American taxpayers.

While President Trump speaks of trimming budgets and spending more money here at home, he's shipping billions of dollars of bombs and shells and bullets that are being used not just to starve the Palestinian people, but to flatten their homes and drive them off of their land.

Mr. President, I oppose this. I believe the American people have had enough. The American people are demanding leadership and clarity—from us, from the White House—that can put an end to this terrible bloodshed and put an end to the misery of generations of Palestinians in Gaza. The American people are demanding leadership from us today to help secure a real justice and peace for the people of the Middle East.

Mr. President, whatever differences we have, none of us *can*, none of us *should*, and none of us *can condone*, the excruciating starvation and misery that can be abated immediately with the full access to the food and medicine that the people of Gaza need.

Mr. President, I yield back.

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